VOLUME 2 DECEMBER 99 ISSUE 9

NEW AGE GAMING SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN PC AND PLAYSTATION GAMING MAGAZINE

THE NOMAD SOUL

NAG's HIGHEST RATING EVER

NOCTURNE

CHILLING REVIEW

HUGE HOLIDAY ISSUE INCLUDES EXCLUSIVE TOMB RAIDER 4 A2 POSTER & INDIANA JONES DEMO MAKES CoverCD 12

FINAL FANTASY VIII

BEST PSX RPG GAME EVER

BLACK & WHITE

EXCLUSIVE Lionhead Studios INTERVIEW and a first look at their title tipped to be the game of 2000

AWESOME CoverCD 12 INCLUDED INSIDE, IF MISSING PLEASE ASK YOUR NEWSAGENT

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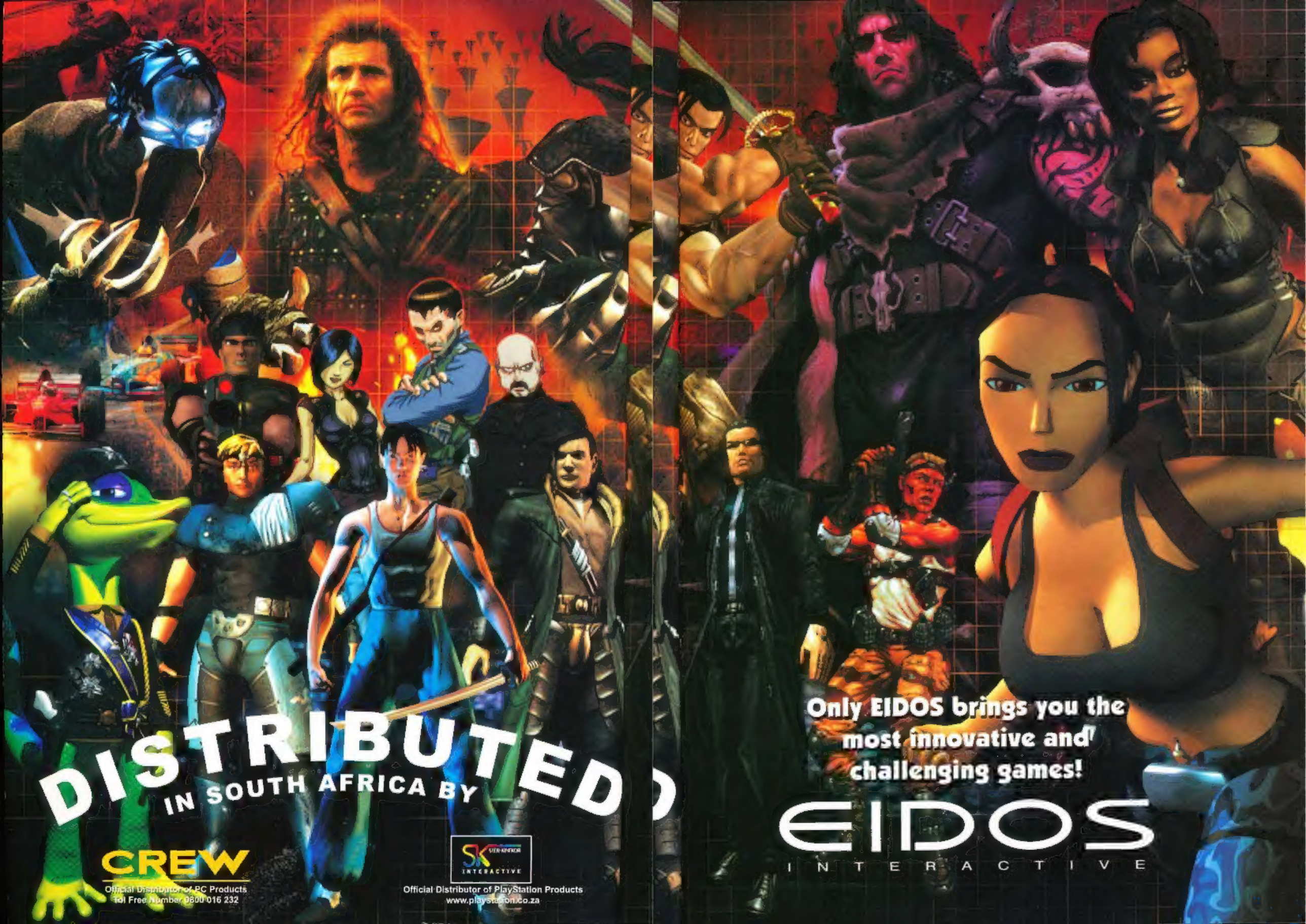
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ED's Note

The Virtual Sex Machine

This Ed's note strangely coincides with our Rampage article that was written a few days after without prior knowledge and... right, now I sound like I'm making excuses. Anyway, the wife has lodged a serious complaint that for once didn't fall on a deaf ear, it raised a debate that was quickly snuffed but it also highlighted a disturbing trend. The concern at hand before we embark on the next thousand years is why are there no sexy virtual men out there, drawing the naturally direct parallel between say Tomb Raider and Quake Arena? Granted you have your muscle flexing fighting game characters and even good old Duke knew how to chat up the odd lass, but in all honesty what's sexy about the Quake grunt? What's sexy about a smelly old wizard or a half-arse man-machine concoction dashing from level to level peppering the bad guys and pasting the aliens? I tried in vain to argue tradition, home-fires, ethnic bonding and even good old logic but was ultimately forced to concede defeat. The more we preach about equality the less of it there seems to be, faced with a choice between two boxes with almost identical games inside we're more likely to grab the one featuring the sexy heroine instead of the hairy gorilla marine. Has it finally happened, are they, and by they I mean the developers, using sex to sell computer games? Consider games of years gone by. How many can you count on one finger that feature a gorgeous woman on the cover or even in the game. Computer gaming has long since been the domain for the male animal. A while back women started taking on the best of the best in Quake and won, and as the months fly past more and more women are taking part in one of mans favourite pastimes, playing computer games. This goes much further back and deeper than we have room for here, beginning with berry picking cave-women right through to ancient Greek Olympics. So now we arrive ready to embrace the female player and what is the first thing she is greeted with, a half-naked women holding a gun and staring into the lens' while all hell breaks loose around her. The Tomb Raider series has in one way or another proven that given enough hormonal potential you can sell anything to any male under the age of sixty, even a simple computer game with two average sequels. The point isn't the lack of male leads in these games it is the point at which all successful marketing begins and ends - with scantily clothed women. So to our female readers, please don't give up on the male species and remember there are still some good games out there that don't rely on sex to sell. To the developers, try and concentrate on making the game fun to play and not the vital statistics of the lead character. The best part about this small essay is that I used the very same technique I'm complaining about to grab your interest in the first place, don't tell me the line, 'The virtual sex machine' didn't get you interested. Case closed.

New Stuff

We've implemented a new review bar that now includes two new score boxes, originality and judgement. The originality score is in place to put those games that rely on past glory in their place and commend new ideas and innovation. The judgement box spot is a score that the reviewer thinks the game deserves and not based on pure mathematical gymnastics. We will be revising the scoring system again early in the New Year, check out our letters page for another insightful take on the whole process and let us know what you think. They often say you should never experiment in the public eye but those wise words were written many years ago and as you are all aware times change and in the ever-evolving world of computers and gaming we need to follow suite. An educated reader once told me that the success of a business is directly linked to its ability to adapt to change, how right he was. So if you're getting a headache trying to keep up with all the changes remember it's for your own good and familiarity does breed contempt even though people hate change, that's the human race for you, full of contradictions.

Michael James, Editor

Merry Christmas

To the New Age Gaming team, freelancers and all our faithful readers, thanks for everything... we really couldn't have done it without you. I'd also like to take this opportunity to say, hi mom. No really, to our readers both new and old, have a great Christmas (if it applies to you) and a fabulous New Year. <Tearjerker Speech> Remember that whatever you take with you into the next millennium will be there to stay, so cast off those shackles and make the next thousand years count, we know we will! Thanks for all the support and if you keep reading, we'll just keep getting better, we promise... really!

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Contents

What's in this issue...

Departments

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH PETER MOLYNEUX FROM LIONHEAD STUDIOS

Page 28

Since NAG's inception we have come across very few exceptional developments in gaming. In our quest to find the 'Holy Grail' of gaming we have more often than not come a little short of the perfect mark. We at NAG believe that there is no perfect game but 'The Nomad Soul' has finally come closest to achieving that prestigious mark. We are proud to announce that we have finally broken the 94% barrier with this title from Eidos Interactive.

IT WAS AN EASY DECISION FOR THE GAMING EDITOR'S CHOICE THIS MONTH. CHECKOUT THE NOMAD SOUL IN ACTION ON PAGE 52

Hardware

HARDWARE

There is so much new hardware out there that we are almost battling to keep up. However, keep up we must, and so we bring you the latest and hottest from the world of mice, gamepads, steering systems and speakers, not to mention a look at a nifty gear shifter for those drivers out there, and an in depth discussion of the Sound Blaster Live! Platinum. Go ahead, indulge yourself. It is Christmas, after all...

We had a rocking good time with the new Sound Blaster Live! Platinum from Creative Labs. Take a look on page 82 for the whole story!

Games

Previews

Reviews

Cover CD

Demos

DARKRON: Nomad Soul
Age of Empires 2: Age of Kings
Dungeon Keeper 2
Spec Ops 2
Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine
Tomb Raider Last Revelation
Fifa 2000
Bugs Bunny Lost in Time

Movies

Black & White Concepts
Half-life Opposing Forces
Giants
Independance War

Patches

Flight Unlimited v2.0
Rogue Spear v2.04
Soul Reaver v1.2
Star Wars: The Phantom Menace v1.1
Broodwars v1.07
StarCraft v1.07

Extras

Directx 7.0
Octopus Handheld Game
Popeye Handheld Game
Half-life Launcher
Quake 1 Wallpaper
Unreal Tournament: Halloween Mod

Creative Labs

Creative LiveWare 3 & Drivers

Please note that the CD contents have changed, and those appearing on the CD cover are incorrect. Please refer to the above list for the correct contents.

PG 58 — MS Flight Simulator 2000

PG 38 — Black & White

PG 26 — Reader Rabbit

PG 68 — Final Fantasy VIII

Coffee Mat Number 10

Unfortunately, with publishing being what it is, there has been a change to the CD since its cover was printed - We have scooped the Indiana Jones demo for you!

Into the second month of our new format on The Web, and still raring to go. This month, aside from the usual gaming related web sites and the like, we also bring you a little look at 'warez' sites, and give you the address of a very interesting discussion about computer game violence. Also, we have decided on a rather different web site of the month. Check it out for all the details.

Running Rampant

It would seem that all attempts to squash out piracy are being foiled by the Internet. I am speaking of 'warez', of course, those sites of dubious distinction that have set themselves up as anti-establishment organisations distributing software, movies and music to those who are cunning enough to find them. These sites, which seem to be in cahoots with some of the more hardcore pornographic spots, are what most people consider to be a blessing.
Realistically speaking, who is going to fork out the cash for any of these products if they can just download them at a fraction of the price? However, what our intrepid little wannabe hackers fail to realise is that the products they are downloading are sub-standard titles. They are ripped... in other words, they are lower quality, in the case of videos and music, and have had music and movie files removed, in the case of software. Additionally, often they do not work correctly, and download speeds are slow - never mind unreliable connections. Piracy is irresponsible behaviour that is both anti-social and illegal. Unfortunately, these Internet criminals have a free reign, what with the difficulty that is experienced in policing the Internet. However, international copyright laws still do apply, and we are happy to report that these 'warez' peddlers are diminishing in number every day.

Kill or be killed

A title that seems to be stirring up a bit of a fuss is Soldier of Fortune, a FPS which is described as action packed and hard core by it's creators. The web site for the game can be found at www.soldier-of-fortune.com. As always, this is a typical pre-release hype site, with lots of screen shots, news and a forum, to name but a few. Seeing as how this exciting looking game is based on the world of mercenary soldiers as popularised by Soldier of Fortune magazine, we decided to try and

find that magazines web site. What we found was a highly informative web site about this magazine, which is based on the real life exploits of mercenaries around the world. This is an unusual place to visit, and can be found at www.sofmag.co.za. It is bound to be highly informative.

Rodents...

There seems to be a huge drive to create "the ultimate gamer's mouse" these days. It seems that the creators of peripherals have decided that gaming products are the way to go, and

everyone is jumping onto the bandwagon. A newcomer on the block is the Razer Boomslang, which can be investigated at www.razerzone.com. One of the most interesting features of this site is the performance simulator that can be downloaded - this nifty little programme simulates the handling of a Boomslang while using a conventional mouse. So, is the Razer Boomslang the ultimate piece of gaming equipment? Check it out and see for yourself.

Big, Bad and Battle ready

Enjoy big games? We're talking big graphics, big story, and big action. Well, if that's the case, you will adore Slave Zero, from Accolade. This city busting, steel twisting action game features some of the biggest battle machines ever seen on the PC. Take to the streets in giant battle robots, while a vast tale unfolds around you. Check this game out at www.slavezero.com.

NAG's site of the month

PlayStation web sites, from a South African point of view, are often considered something of a squandered resource. As a matter of fact, the PlayStation gamer generally does not get involved with the internet, considering the fact that most console gamers aren't PC crazy, and most PC owners don't go in for consoles. However, sweeping generalisations aside, there are obviously quite a number of individuals residing on the far ends of the oceans that are utilising the Internet's potential for the spreading of information about the Sony PlayStation. After all, that's what the Internet is all about - information. What better source of knowledge is available to us today, with such a broad coverage?
One site that really gets down to the job of spreading the PlayStation

word is the PlayStation Galleria, and an American site which can be found at www.vidgames.com. This is, without a doubt, the best independent PlayStation site that we have come across in a very long time. The Galleria covers every aspect of the PlayStation, from games to hardware, cheats to news going back as far as 1995. It is an amazing resource for the casual gamer, as well as those players that want a bit more in depth information. Links to every major (and minor) developer can be found, and games can even be cross-referenced with input devices and other aspects for compatibility. FAQs, previews and reviews are also available for all featured titles (which, by the way, includes every title on the US market). This is a truly impressive site, with a wealth of useful information for the PlayStation gamer. So, loan a computer and get your feet wet, check it out!

Where the real SA gamers go...

A local site that is of great interest to 'pro' gamers is Challenge ZA www.challenge-za.com/. This is a site where all the important news concerning local and international gaming can be found. There are links - literally hundreds of them - to sites all around the world, dealing with all types of multiplayer computer gaming. Everything you could possibly want to know about multiplayer gaming can be found here - it is a very valuable information resource for the serious, competitive gamer. Another site, linked off of this particular one, is 3D Xtreme, the only South African site linked from Challenge ZA It deals directly with local gaming, with news on events, gossip, downloadable demos, and much more - located at www.3dxtreme.co.za. So, take your multiplayer experience to the limit with these two sites.

Food for thought...

Here's something we don't look at every day. And yet, sites that deal with information in it's many guises are so numerous that we could not even begin to cover even one per cent of what's out there. But, we did dig up an interesting discussion concerning computer game violence, and it's effect on people. This is, and has been for quite some time, a very topical subject. The two schools of thought concerning this question have very differing views, and getting all the necessary information when formulating one's own opinion. Visiting sites like www.pcparadox.com will certainly help you in coming up with what you need to believe about this type of question. Check it out - it really is informative and, yes, it is game related!

Baldur's Gate 2

In more news of things that go 'role-play me' in the night, BioWare, Interplay's role-playing division has officially announced Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn. Under a tight veil of secrecy, Interplay has been developing the game since January this year. The team behind the game has also been working closely with Wizards of the West Coast and TSR to ensure that this sequel is as rich in Forgotten Realms lore and history as possible with an impressive story, more in-depth and detailed than ever before. The game will be using Advanced Dungeons & Dragon 2nd edition rules. Every single aspect of Baldur's Gate 2 has been pulled through the mill, re-arranged and perfected and promises to give computer role players the game they thought they always wanted. The game engine has also been refreshed and improved on and now offers greater depth, increased realism and a far more engrossing experience. Besides improving everything the team behind the game have added more character classes, dramatically increased the number (300 in total) and graphical complexity of spells, have added and increased the size and number (over 120) of monsters in the game and implemented drastic changes with a number of gameplay issues. The game also promises to be accessible to newcomers with user friendly controls and a well designed manual but will also stun veterans with its complexity, depth and sheer size. Naturally the design and development team are improving on everything and fixing all the past mistakes, thereby creating the perfect

computer role-playing game. The game is set along the southern portion of the Sword Coast in the merchant realm of Amn and will include such diverse environments as the Capitol City of Amn, the Astral Plane, Hell, and even an underwater city. Here are a few of the more interesting snippets of information: Only gold pieces will used as currency; there will be no seasonal changes in the game; the same isometric view will be used; maximum party size will be six; there will be offensive and defensive party formations; encumbrance will be tracked for each character; instantaneous travelling to places past visited will be possible; there will traps in dungeons and on chests; over a 100 sub-quests are planned; Druids will be able to shape change into any animal in the area; a faster overall walking speed has been used; there are more than 20 new kits and character classes as well as a few new races; the game will support 3D accelerators but the background will still be 2D; resolutions up to and including 800 X 600 are supported; it will ship on 4 - 5 CD's with a similar install size; the game will play for around 100+ hours and finally the game has roughly 300 000 animation frames, not including water, waving flags or other animated objects.

Diablo II Delayed

Christmas slippage seems to be quite fashionable this year and sadly Diablo II has become yet another victim of this annoying 'condition'. However, if you take a step back and look at the predicament many of these game developers find themselves in, it's easy to understand how this happens. For example, a few seconds

after any new game, sequel or piece of hardware is announced everyone's next question is, "when will it be released?". The best answer has always been - when it's ready. With regards to the Diablo debacle the official stance the developers are taking is one of perfectionists, saying that they would rather delay the title to ensure a better product when it is finally released. A recent Internet poll saw that although the game has been delayed, many will still buy it when it comes out. Developers, Blizzard also said that Diablo II is the most ambitious project they have ever undertaken and they want to get it right the first time. A limited (1000 players) beta testing phase will commence before the end of the year (New Age Gaming is on that beta test list, so we'll have an inside scoop for you soon). After the beta phase, an Internet 'calling all gamers' demo will be released to stress test Blizzards' new Battle.net servers. The game is now pegged at an early 2000, just remember though that 'early' can mean anything.

Clowning Around

Here's a strange one, ever wanted to waste a clown with a rocket launcher? Well now you can, sort of... KISS: Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child, besides being a mouthful offers the player four unique realms of anguish. The game is a first person shooter that features the realms of fire, earth, air, and water. There aren't too many details on the game as of yet but it's promising to be one hell of an experience. The game is based on the KISS comics from Todd McFarlane Productions, the guy responsible for Spawn among other things. If everything stays on track the game should hit our dark and distant shores in the early half of 2000. For more circus foolery go to www.gotgames.com, quick!

DVD Encryption Cracked

One of the movie industry's worst fears has been realised, as computer hackers have cracked the encryption code on DVD movie discs that is supposed to prevent them from easily being copied. Every movie released on DVD is encrypted under a scheme called CSS (Content Scrambling System), meaning it can't be played back except by a DVD player that has a special decryption key built into the hardware. Some 400 different hardware keys were created - one for each manufacturer. Unfortunately one of these manufacturers neglected to encrypt their decryption key, making it easy for the hackers to unlock the movie files. The programmers were then able to guess more than a hundred other keys, and a utility called De-CSS was eventually released. De-CSS is a freeware program that can read DVD movie files and save them to hard drives unencrypted. Ironically, the programmers who broke the code weren't trying to enable piracy, they were trying to create a DVD player that was compatible with the Linux operating system. It was while playing around with Windows DVD-ROM drives that they discovered the unprotected key. It's too early to tell what effect this may have on the fledgling DVD market, but speculation has ranged from delays in releasing high-capacity DVD writers to higher prices for DVD movies as companies try to make up for perceived lost profits. Even the PlayStation 2, which is supposed to have a DVD player built-in, could be affected.

The Next Oddity

The next title in the Oddworld series, Munch's Oddysee is almost upon us. This time around the developers are taking a different approach to this successful series and instead of presenting the player with an endless gauntlet of puzzles they've decided on a 'world simulation' angle. This new game will feature both Abe, the Mudokan mystic from the first two games and Lulamire Munch, the last of the Gabbits. In continuing with the Oddworld black comedy theme, the story trails the last member of the Gabbits, another of the many odd types of inhabitants in the game world. These Gabbits are a weird species that were exploited by the Glukkons (bad guys), for example many Glukkons who had lung cancer would take the lungs out of healthy Gabbits to replace their own. In addition to this Gabbit eggs were used to make a tasty dish called, 'Gabbiare'. As you can see very strange stuff indeed, the game should arrive July 2000 for both the PlayStation and PC.

Bleem! Slow Down

At their site, www.bleem.com you can download Bleem! 1.5, the latest upgrade of a program that allows PC users to play PlayStation games on their computers. This latest version delivers improved compatibility for more than 70 games, bug fixes, improved texture rendering in DirectXD and better speed management for consistent play in windows. Bleem! 1.5 also improves memory card support for popular games such as Final Fantasy VIII and WWF: Attitude effectively adding more than 40 new titles to the 230 plus existing games. The upgrade will now also let users play, for the first time, Dino Crisis, Knockout Kings and Final Doom. The major tweak however is for better game speed control largely due to the fact that PC users end up playing games quicker than the original versions due to internal timing differences between the two platforms. This code fix now brings better sound synchronisation and gameplay that more closely matches the PlayStation. Other improvements include a new 'texel alignment' option that eliminates faint lines that occasionally appear between textures when playing the games in 3D hardware mode. Besides all that the new version has support for automatic configuration profiles for some game controllers and an installer/uninstaller program for easier download, installation and removal. The new upgrade is free, so if you own Bleem! go get it.

bleem!

Don't throw this controller!

We've all seen people do it and have often done it ourselves, that is move, turn and twist a PlayStation controller in the air as if to somehow get across the urgency of the button pressing or D-Pad pushing. We all know this never works, but what if it did? A new company,

Airpad Corporation has developed a highly sensitive two-axis tilt controller called the Airpad. The way the pad works is by translating hand movements into game control commands, for example tilting it from left to right moves your car, or character from left to right and the same with backward and forward motions. The company plans to release different versions including 'rumble', 'resister', and even voice-activated models. There will be both PlayStation and PC versions of the same controller and a range of funky clip-on attachments that allow gamers to customise their Airpads. If you want to have a closer look, visit www.airpad.com and tell them we sent you.

BITS & BYTES

New Age Gaming Price Comparison

Game Title	Incredible Connection	CNA Interactive	Toys R Us	Reggies
WWF Attitude (PSX)	R 439.99	R 439.00	None	None
Hot Wheels (PSX)	R 369.99	R 369.00	R 379.00	R 379.00
Sled Storm (PSX)	R 369.99	R 359.00	R 379.00	R 380.00
Castrol Super Bikes (PSX)	R 459.99	R 469.00	None	None
Army Men 2 (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA
Darkstone (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA
Prince Of Persia 3D (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.99	NA	NA
Tiberian Sun (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA

Release Lists

New Age Gaming takes no responsibility for the accuracy of this information. Any of the release dates may be changed if the developer deems it necessary. The only official shipping date that most developers give these days is, 'When it's done!'

PC Release List

December

01 - Boarder Zone - INFOGRAMES
01 - Mission Impossible - INFOGRAMES
01 - Official Formula Racing 99 - EIDOS
01 - Test Drive Rally - INFOGRAMES
01 - Urban Chaos - EIDOS
02 - MechWarrior III Expansion - HASBRO
07 - Battlezone 2 - ACTIVISION
07 - Crusaders of Might & Magic - 3DO
07 - Quake III: Arena - ACTIVISION
10 - Wall Street Trader - INTERPLAY
14 - Invictus - INTERPLAY
14 - Messiah - SHINY
15 - Operational Art War II - TALONSOFT
20 - Daikatana - EIDOS
28 - Earthworm Jim - INTERPLAY
28 - Star Trek: Klingon Academy - INTERPLAY
29 - H & D Mission Pack - TALONSOFT
31 - Soldier of Fortune - ACTIVISION

January

03 - B17 Flying Fortress - HASBRO
03 - Fading Suns: Noble Armada - RIPCORD
03 - Flash Point - UBI SOFT
03 - Giants - INTERPLAY ENTERTAINMENT
03 - Halo - BUNGIE SOFTWARE
03 - IHRA Drag Racing - BETHESDA
03 - Legend of the Blademasters - RIPCORD
03 - Mortyr - INTERPLAY
03 - Risk II - HASBRO INTERACTIVE
03 - Road to Moscow - UBI SOFT
03 - Sports Heroes II - MINDSCAPE
03 - Skip Barber Racing - BETHESDA
03 - Splinter - ELECTRONIC ARTS
03 - Wall Street Tycoon - UBI SOFT
03 - Wizardry VIII - SIR-TECH CANADA
17 - Ameri: The Awakening - GT
17 - Dukes of Hazzard - SOUTHPEAK
17 - Hired Guns - PSYGNOSIS
17 - Imperium Galactica 2 - GT
17 - Rising Sun - TALONSOFT
17 - Team Fortress II - HAWKS INTERACTIVE
18 - C&C2 Tiberian Sun: Firestorm - EA
18 - Need for Speed: Motor City - EA
18 - Superbike 2000 - EA
21 - 1602 A.D. - GT INTERACTIVE
25 - F/A-18: Jane's - EA
25 - Final Fantasy VIII - EA
25 - The Sims - MAXIS 51

PSX Release List

December

01 - Iron Soldier 3 - VATIC AI
01 - Rugrats: Studio Tour - THQ
01 - Twisted Metal 4 - SCEA
02 - Army Men Air Attack - 3DO
02 - Ballistic - INFOGRAMES
02 - Knockout Kings 2000 - EA
02 - Spyro Ripto's Rage! - SCEA
02 - Supercross Circuit - SCEA
02 - V-Rally 2 - EA
04 - Monkey Magic - ELECTRO SOURCE
05 - Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition - SNK
09 - Formula One 99 - ACTIVISION
09 - Killer Loop - CRAVE
09 - Supercross 2000 - EA
09 - Test Drive 6 - INFOGRAMES
09 - Tomorrow Never Dies - EA
09 - Wu Tang: Shaolin Style - ACTIVISION
10 - Resident Evil 3: Nemesis - CAPCOM
10 - Shadow Tower - AGETEC
11 - Worms Armageddon - HASBRO
12 - Q-Bert - HASBRO INTERACTIVE
15 - Barbie Ride and Race - MATTEL MEDIA
16 - Medal of Honor - EA
16 - Missile Command - HASBRO
16 - Rainbow Six - SOUTHPEAK
16 - Renegade Racer - INTERPLAY
16 - Toy Story 2 - ACTIVISION
16 - Warpath: Jurassic Park - EA
17 - Dune 2000 - EA
17 - Silhouette Mirage - WORKING DESIGNS
22 - Clover - HASBRO INTERACTIVE
23 - Mission Impossible - INFOGRAMES
23 - Smurfs - INFOGRAMES
23 - Vandal Hearts 2 - KONAMI
29 - Cannongeddon - INTERPLAY

January

01 - All Star Tennis 99 - UBI SOFT
01 - NBA in the Zone 2000 - KONAMI
01 - NHL Blades of Steel 2000 - KONAMI
07 - Broken Sword 2 - CRAVE
07 - Gran Turismo 2 - SCEA
07 - March Madness 2000 - EA
14 - Army Men Sarge's Heroes - 3DO
14 - Crusaders of Might & Magic - 3DO
14 - Fighting Force 2 - EIDOS
15 - Shao Lin - THQ
15 - Urban Chaos - EIDOS

In Passing...

Back in time

Xatrix is working hard on a Wolfenstein 3D sequel imaginatively called, Wolfenstein 2000 and have confirmed the rumours of the 'other' tentatively titled sequel, Return to Castle Wolfenstein, the same game. Nothing is set in stone at this time but the developers are hoping to get the game in stores before Christmas 2000. Questions about what engine it will use and how far along it is are all up for speculation until the company releases something more solid.

Simon 3D

The third instalment of Simon the Sorcerer is coming soon and Hasbro Interactive is going to publish it. The developers are taking all the elements that made the first two game such a success (humour and mind-bending puzzles) and incorporating them into a new real time 3D environment. The same 3D engine that Prince of Persia 3D uses will power the game along and it's currently set for a 2000 first quarter release. Expect a full preview soon.

Hey monkey boy!

Fox Interactive is gearing up for the release of their upcoming 3D action and adventure game, Planet of the Apes (based on the classic novel by Pierre Boulle). As Ulysses, you crash land a spaceship on an uncharted planet 1,000 years in the future and soon discover a cruel evolutionary twist where Apes rule and human beings are at the bottom of the food chain. In a bid for survival, you must progress through this huge action adventure game and unravel the mystery of the compelling story line. Go see www.foxinteractive.com for more.

ION Storm clan

Finally someone is going to do something useful, Eidos is going to take control of the rocky Ion Storm. Both Todd Porter and Jerry O'Flaherty won't be surviving the transition, they're leaving as Eidos takes a hefty 51 percent share of the company. John Cavanaugh from Eidos will be moving in to run the show and John Romero, Tom Hall, and Warren Spector will remain as employees of Eidos. Maybe we'll see some of those promised games soon.... any day now in fact would be good.

Dual Shock incompatible

According to an English Hong Kong gaming site, the Dual Shock and Dual Shock 2 are incompatible. If this rumour is true it simply means a second player can't use your older spare controller while playing a PlayStation 2 game and so the divide opens wider.

Heavy Gear Cartoon

Fans of Activision's Heavy Gear computer game franchise can look forward to seeing their favourite pastime on the small screen. Sony Pictures Family Entertainment today announced a 40-episode deal that will make the game a cartoon.

Quake 3: Arena Demo

To alleviate the strain the entire Internet will feel when id Software releases the official Quake 3: Arena demo a company called Sandpiper Networks will undertake the task of worldwide distribution across the Internet. This will speed up the download process and decrease congestion.

Big Games

If you've ever wondered which games sold the most units since gaming began then peruse the following list, it's more surprising than you think. (The rather large number on the right of each entry denotes how many units (in total) of each title have shipped from January 1993 to September 1999).

1. Myst - 4,236,198
2. MS Flight Simulator - 2,781,288
3. Doom II -1,553,587
4. Riven - 1,305,595
5. Monopoly Game - 1,273,553
6. Warcraft II - 1,250,675
7. Diablo - 1,176,457
8. Doom Shareware - 1,154,541
9. Sim City 2000 - 1,136,244
10. Star Wars: Dark Forces - 952,033
11. Duke Nukem 3D - 946,664
12. Deer Hunter - 944,703
13. 7th Guest - 926,948
14. Starcraft - 906,128
15. MS Return of Arcade - 902,313
16. Lego Island - 897,005
17. Red Alert - 869,623
18. Sim City Classic - 827,355
19. Barbie Fashion Designer - 825,655
20. Ultimate Doom Thy Flesh - 787,397

Sunglasses at Night

A product that simply begs for a look of the long and hard kind are the Diamond Monster shades 3D glasses, the company recently announced this newest addition to its family of 3D gaming products. S3 are using stereoscopic shutter technology to design lenses that take the spatial relationships created from the game

and created an illusion of 3D depth. The unit works by plugging it into the VGA output on a system graphics accelerator (and requires a monitor capable of a minimum of 120 MHz refresh rate). The shades offer support for titles designed with DirectX, OpenGL and Glide APIs, and a host of chipsets and accelerators including 3Dfx's Voodoo III, Nvidia's TNT Ultra and S3's Savage 4. The package will ship with the unit, connector cable, driver discs and user guide, users will also be able to change the units colour with a number of Snap-On frame attachments. It certainly sounds innovative, but only a tough hardware test will expose it for what it really is.

Elite IV Coming Soon!

What was your status, dangerous, deadly, or elite? The good news after much legal wrangling is that David Braben will be developing the next Elite.

The first game was a space trading/fighting game that used primitive wire frame graphics to get the message across. Back in those days you didn't have much graphical gloss when it came to gaming but somehow David Braben managed to give us the universe to explore. Many still regard this old classic as the best space trading game ever, even in light of what you can play today.

The two previous sequels were failures due to a number of different problems, and somehow never attained the heights reached by the first game.

No details are available but the very promise of this title sends shivers down the spine.

Fly! with the Flies

More flying things and ground bits

Fly!, published by Gathering of Developers and created by Terminal Reality is about to get its first expansion pack. The add-on will feature scenery from the Pacific Northwest Region, including Washington, Northern Oregon, southern British Columbia, and

Canada. The expansion was created using actual satellite imagery so it should look just like the real thing, great if you live in America, interesting for everyone else. Three new aircraft will also be added including the 757, 767 and 777, the new aircraft will have full working cockpits, detailed external models and flight manuals. The individual cockpit instrumentation of each new plane has been designed according to actual layouts and will contain most of the systems contained on the flight deck, even the odd cup of coffee and bullet shells left over from recent hijackings. For the real interesting stuff click your way to www.avsim.com for a huge collection of flight areas created with the Fly! scenery editor, including Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon, other add-ons and alterations made to existing models can also be found there.

Fly! II

Developer, Terminal Reality has announced they have started designing and developing Fly! II. The new game will offer expanded 3D models, aircraft and scenery including new elevation scenes and higher resolution images. Fly! II will offer more points of interest, improved visual effects and complete thorough instructions and assistance for beginners as well as a global flight area, a worldwide digital elevation terrain model, true satellite imagery and avionics systems detailed to each aircraft's original specification. Gathering of Developers will publish the game late in 2000.

jUSt cHARTs

Well, the silly season is officially here, and no doubt a lot of software is going to find its way to the special spot under the Christmas tree. Times like this obviously play havoc with charts as people embark on buying sprees, and the charts may look totally different next month!
However, for now, we have some (expected) new faces in the charts. Most notably, of course, is Microsoft's Age of Empires 2, which makes it's local chart debut in the prized first position - nothing strange there, as we were expecting this to be the case with one of the most anticipated titles of this year. Some old stalwarts of the chart are showing signs of slipping, but newcomer Homeworld features favourably at fifth. On the PlayStation side, Croc 2 stands firm for its second month, with Silent Hill quietly creeping through the ranks. ShadowMan opens well at third, and Sled Storm blasts onto the chart in fifth position.

Local PC Charts

Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	Age of Empires 2 Age of Kings	New	New
2.	C&C 2 Tiberian Sun	1	2
3.	System Shock 2	2	1
4.	Stars	4	1
5.	Homeworld	New	New
6.	Dungeon Keeper 2	6	3
7.	Outcast	5	2
8.	Aliens Vs Predator	7	3
9.	Rage of Mages 2	New	New
10.	Hidden & Dangerous	9	2

International PC Charts

Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Age of Empires 2 Age of Kings	Microsoft
2.	Heroes of Might and Magic 3	New World/3DO
3.	Alpha Centauri Firaxis	Electronic Arts
4.	Baldur's Game	Bioware/Interplay
5.	Jagged Alliance 2	Sir-Tech/Talonsoft
6.	System Shock 2	Looking Glass/EA
7.	Homeworld	Relic/Sierra
8.	C&C 2 Tiberian Sun	Westwood/EA
9.	Half Life	Valve/Sierra
10.	Might and Magic 7	New World/3DO

Local PlayStation Charts

Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	Croc 2	1	1
2.	Silent Hill	3	2
3.	Shadowman	New	New
4.	Castrol Super Bikes	6	1
5.	Sled Storm	New	New
6.	Driver	4	4
7.	WWF Attitude	New	New
8.	Syphon Filter	2	2
9.	Point Blank 2	7	1
10.	Metal Gear Solid	Re-entry	Re-entry

International PlayStation Charts

Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Final Fantasy 8	Square
2.	Suikoden 2	Konami
3.	Ridge Racer Type 4	Sony
4.	Grandia	Gamearts/Sony
5.	Final Fantasy Anthology	Square
6.	Dino Crisis	Capcom
7.	Metal Gear Solid	Konami
8.	Driver	Reflections/GT
9.	Lunar	Sony
10.	Star Ocean	Tri-Ace/Enix/Sony

Love, Lust & Lara

Ramjet gets the Christmas spirit, and talks about what's on everyone's mind over the silly season: sex!

Any comments or replies (even general slating) can be sent to: ramjet@mag.co.za

There seems to be a strange phenomenon that has cropped up in the last few years. It appears that hot-blooded young men are now spending their time in front of their computer monitors, rather than at the pool or beach, watching girls in bikinis jiggle by. Why? What strange mind-cult has these poor unfortunate plebeians so firmly in their grasp? What strange aberration of human nature has forced these unfortunate souls to turn from lusty, lively pursuits and barricade themselves in their rooms, accompanied only by the sickly glow of a PC monitor? The answer, in two words: cyber babes. Those virtual, pixel-based playmates dance across the game in tantalisingly tight garb, with gravity defying, err... assets that make your eyes water. They dash around the game and wobble at just the right time to affect this certain sect of society, making them get all sweaty and excited. It is, quite simply, a rather sad state of affairs.

When I was younger - at around the time that Noah realised that keeping that many animals cooped up in a confined space is quite a messy affair - guys used to look at girls too, but these were flesh and blood, buxom wenches that weren't dreamed up by horny game developers locked up in dark little rooms with overflowing ashtrays and very little knowledge of female anatomy. The girls we drooled over, even if they were on movie screens, at least lived and breathed and existed somewhere on the planet, and even if we would never even stand a chance of meeting them, they at least shared the same planet with us. The chances of having an affair with Lara Croft are, to say the very least, incredibly remote. And the kids would look really funny.

What are computers (and computer games) doing to society? We already have an insular, distrusting and paranoid way of life. But the effects of computers are just forcing us into smaller and smaller units, making us more antisocial than ever before. There are people out there (and you know exactly who you are) who would rather sit behind a computer and watch their monitor than go out and meet people. These folks think that IRC chatting is a socially solid way of making new friends, forgetting that half the people that frequent chat rooms are weirdos, freaks and potentially mentally disturbed (I know this because I am one of the latter ones). Add to this horrid little twist the fact that half of these guys are now spending their time drooling over misshapen cyber-babes (which just keeps them in their rooms for longer and wreaks havoc with the household's toilet paper consumption) and the future of the human race is in serious jeopardy. This is, however, not the fault of developers. See, humans are inherently sexual creatures. We were created so that we can continue the survival of our species. In essence, this is the purpose of every living creature on the planet, from amoebas to elephants - life is about making whoopee and having babies. Ergo, with computers becoming the huge thing they are, they have been incorporated into the sexual exploits of the people who use them. The developers didn't perpetuate this - they are just taking advantage of it.

I find it incredibly disturbing (not to mention lame) that people are starting to get turned on by cyber babes. Okay, so the amount of guys who actually get really turned-on is quite minor, but they are out there. It seems that, as a species, we have devolved into complete and utter mental and physical weakness, our senses and passions dulled by the Information Age.

Some guy actually asked me why he should go out and meet people when he has the Internet. I was appalled, and tried to explain to him, with the use of several diagrams and large, sweeping gestures, why its impossible to actually have kids, or even plain, good old sex over the net. His blank faced response cast me into a pit of despair. His comment about cyber-sex that followed ensured that there was no ladder to get out.

This is an incredibly sad situation, and one that disturbs me deeply. Look, I like computers as much as anyone else (well, maybe not) and enjoy chatting online and playing games and all that stuff, but come on, people? Have we lost all our backbone? Have we lost all our passion, and our drive, that we must now isolate ourselves and hide behind cheesy nicks and false pretences? This is why people who use computers are called Nerds, folks. There is absolutely no excuse for this kind of behaviour. It indicates a weakened society, filled with people who have growing identity and personality problems. Thankfully not everyone has fallen into this trap of pathetic apathy, but the numbers of these offensive little jellyfish are growing daily. And, the really scary thing is that it seems to affect mainly the male population - which is cool, because it leaves more chicks for guys, like me, that do go out.

I issue a challenge to every guy sitting out there that spends every night behind his computer and blushes if a real woman even walks past him. Take one night, just one little night, out of your busy schedule (which is crammed up with chatting, playing games and staring at a blank monitor because the other two things have just got too boring - I know, I've seen you) and go somewhere. Speak to a girl. Really. Not just "excuse me" as you flee past her out the door, but actually have a conversation. And not someone that you met in some IRC chat room either, and have been talking to for seven years, and have taken three years to finally meet face to face, but an actual stranger. I guarantee that not one of you 'computer nerds' has the guts to do it.

Now, wait a moment, guys, before you flood me with stupid mail, let me clarify. Once again, not every computer user is a loser. The few out there know that they are. They are the ones that need to catch a major wake up.

So, take down those Lara Croft posters *[Never! Ed]* and quit IRC, discover that there is a world beyond the four walls that you exist between. Air the room. Open the curtains. Go out. Put on sun block, because you're probably the colour of a corpse. But please, if only for yourself, get a life.

Ramjet

BACKCHAT

Thank you to everyone who sent in this month's mail bag. We can only reply to a few letters, but we read them all. Send them all, you can send e-mail to the addresses [illegible] Please ensure to include all your details when you write in, we need your name and address if you want a reply. Any swearing will be dealt with violently.

Well done to Ross Kukard who wins a [illegible] the questions among those at [illegible]

Backchat
PO Box 2749
Alberton
1449

SA Gaming

[illegible]

Jonathan
E-mail

[illegible]

The performance factor

[illegible]

Shay Coverch
Randburg

[illegible]

Ask a question

[illegible]

Ryan Brosovsky
E-mail

[illegible]

No email request

[illegible]

Diablo
E-mail

[illegible]

Suggestion

[illegible]

Brad ey
E-mail

[illegible]

Rating system

[illegible]

Everyone was in Quake Arena for Xmas

BACKCHAT

Jenny Solomon

Ross Kukard
Cape Town

Conraad
Mountain View

English please

Clifford
Vereniging

Backchat

Backchat Technical

Greetings fellow retro game fans! Yes Christmas awaits and so does the end of the world, it's only an odd 5 days away now, scared yet? At least retro gamers and console gamers have fewer worries than PC gamers do. If the rumours on the Y2K thing are for real, we'll still be able to use our Atari and PlayStation consoles. We'll with that gloom outlook behind us, I managed to see a couple of old 80's movies in the past few months and that has inspired me for this months article.

During the year we looked at the [illegible]

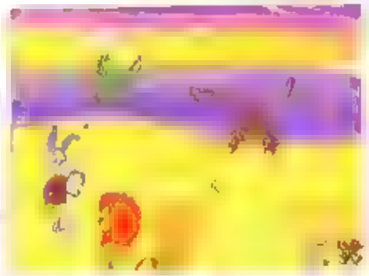
Game & Watch

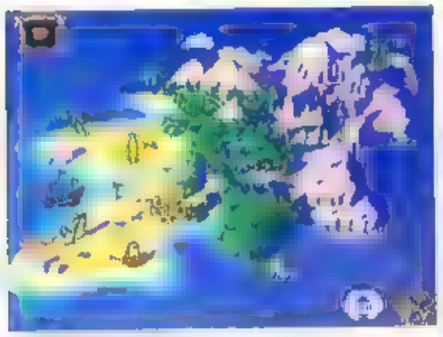
HAS GIVEN UP HIS MONITOR IN FAVOUR OF SOMETHING SMALLER, A 10CM LCD DISPLAY, AND HE LOVES IT!

[illegible]

If you told almost any parent a few years ago that computer games would eventually become the perfect tool for teaching children mathematics, reading and other subjects they would have laughed at you. The Learning Company has always come up with high quality educational titles that are fun to play and really do teach kids a thing or two. So who is laughing now?

Reader Rabbit's Maths Ages 6-8





Monkey Pizza Party

Pirate Lookout
Educational focus: Reading a [illegible] adding and subtracting on a clock

Tourist Trap
[illegible] (this is American Dollar based and useless in South Africa)

Number Line Measurement
Educational focus: Finding a number on a number line, adding and subtracting numbers on a number line and solving multi-step problems

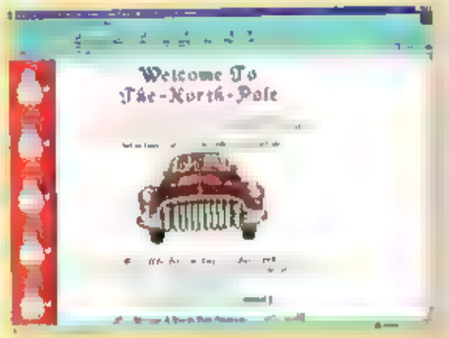
Fishing for Numbers

Pirate Splash

Sail Make

Category: Education | **Ages:** 6-8 | **Internet:** http://www.learningco.com | **System Requirements:** 486 DX/66 or Higher | Windows 3 | 16 MB RAM | 20 MB HHD | 1 MB Video Card | **Developer:** The Learning Company | **Publisher:** Mattel Interactive | **Distributor:** EA Africa (011) 803-12 2 | **RRP:** R 179.00

Kids Net



You've heard rumours somewhere that there are good sites for kids on the Internet but finding them is proving a little difficult especially since you'd rather be surfing for other more important things like rugby and soccer scores. Don't give up yet because Santa Clause has his own special spot on the Internet. The site surprisingly enough is located at [illegible] making it easy to remember for kids too suitably named to boot. Once inside the site you can send a letter to Santa, send a letter from the North Pole to a relative and even do a little Christmas shopping. The site also has a number of interactive things for kids to do including singing along with Christmas carols and discovering different ways to entertain themselves during December with recipes and crafts for kids (supervision recommended in the kitchen). Besides the fun and games kids can also travel around the world and see how children celebrate the festive season in other countries and read up on the history of Santa Clause. It's a fun site and well worth a visit, even if it's only once a year around this time.

No matter how much paper you put down or what you restrict their 'creative' activities to, kids will always make a mess. Paint programs for children are great, now you can let them spend that quality time in front of a computer monitor and after the fun and games are over all you need to do is click your mouse a few times and all that mess just disappears.

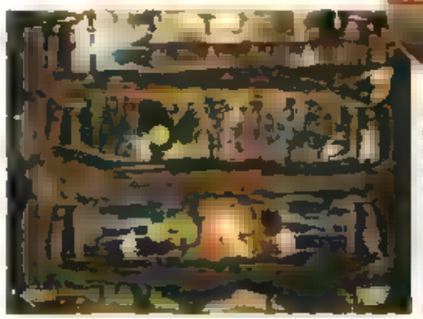
Disney's Magic Artist Studio

Magic Stamps which can then be [illegible] can animate your creations into impressive slide [illegible] can be tabbed with musical [illegible] greater end [illegible]

Category: Creativity | **Ages:** All Ages | **Internet:** http://www.disneyinteractive.com | **System Requirements:** Pentium 33 MHz | Windows 95 | 32 MB RAM | 70 MB HHD | 1MB Video Card | **Developer:** Disney Interactive | **Publisher:** Infogrames | **Distributor:** Crew (011) 233-1111 | **RRP:** R 299.00

Animated villains are always on the receiving end of all the punishment, so wouldn't it be great if they started changing the rules and did away, once and for all, with all the happy endings?

Disney's Villains' Revenge



Category: Games | **Ages:** 8 & Up | **Internet:** http://www.disneyinteractive.com | **System Requirements:** Pentium 133 MHz | Windows 95 | 16 MB RAM | 60 MB HHD | 1MB Video Card | **Developer:** Disney Interactive | **Publisher:** Infogrames | **Distributor:** Crew (011) 233-1111 | **RRP:** R 299.00

1	Freddi Fish Deluxe	GT Interactive
2	Jump Start First Grade	Knowledge Interactive
3	Reader Rabbit Personalized 2nd Grade	Mattel Interactive
4	Reader Rabbit Personalized 1st Grade	Mattel Interactive
5	JumpStart Pre-school	Knowledge Interactive

About the Man - Peter Molyneux

NEW AGE GAMING
EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW

There are few icons in our industry and even fewer who manage to continually create games that break new ground. Peter Molyneux, who sold up Bullfrog two years ago and started a team known as Lionhead, is putting the final touches to his next game called Black & White. Having first met Peter 10 years ago whilst he was making his first hit Populous no one would know that this unassuming and amusing man was a millionaire. Most people in his position would grant you an audience for 30 minutes but Peter is still eager to talk and explain and so time is never a problem. I met up with Peter to find out a bit more about what makes him tick and also delve into Black and White at his Guildford office!

PM: I really do not wan[illegible] to think where [illegible] might have been. I have a strong belief that [illegible] am not [illegible] intelligent. I can't write or draw, play music or do sports. I live and breathe games. I would probably be [illegible] some corporate hell not doing very well. If [illegible] had the gift of being clever then [illegible] would have gone into gene[illegible]

PM: [illegible] Miyamoto, the [illegible] the game [illegible] to work on.

PM: Ten years ago [illegible] on baked beans and [illegible] pay the bills. Now I do not have to [illegible] but I love cooking [illegible]. I have tried to give it up but after a week I feel po[illegible] and [illegible] do what makes me happy. This is my [illegible]

PM: I am looking forward to playing [illegible] Interworld. I have a copy but haven't booted it up as I will not have time to do other things. Quake 3 and all [illegible] Unreal Tournament 3.

PM: I must be Zelda. The first game I bought was Space Invaders on the BBC. Actually that I was really disappointed with, it did not live up to the arcade version. The first game I bought and enjoyed was Defender of the Crown on the Amiga and Red Alert is one of my all time favourites.

PM: What is the best way to get the best out of people and support their talent? When I first met Glen Corpes, who wrote many games for Bullfrog, he walked into the office, had never written a game, was a computer operator, never done any programming but since I spoke to him I knew [illegible]

PM: This is going to sound really boring but it was the [illegible] showing of B & W. There was a lot riding on it and [illegible] incredible the reaction I got.

PM: [illegible] really enjoyed Red Alert. I must have played this five times. I can start to finish and [illegible] was a 12 year old kid waiting for Tiberian Sun and [illegible] was really disappointed. It was good but wasn't what I had expected. With three years in development, I expected a lot more. To add I [illegible]

PM: My love and pas[illegible] I never really [illegible]

"Image is very important to the company and me but I have never been on any courses to learn the best way to get over an idea. It is all via lots of years of experience. It is being passionate about the games you are working on that you can endear yourself to the public. If you take out time to explain things then people will be more ready to talk and ask questions. The real trick, as far as I can see, is taking notice of journalists and the public. When I explain a game, I take note of their reaction. If I see a spark of interest in their eyes I know they have taken things in and if I notice lots of people are interested in one area then I will work on that element even more! One smile or one reaction is all I need! I show games a lot earlier than most developers so I can get the feedback I need. I can easily see if they are bored."

[illegible] next day I would go [illegible] game. At the weekend I never go near or turn on a [illegible] anything but. I get drunk, do not even watch TV much. I guess I socialise a lot but nothing more. There is not enough room in my [illegible] book. [illegible] game [illegible] that does not leave me any room for anything else. I can't understand how people can fit between so many things. My focus is on games.

PM: Being dyslexic was a [illegible] school so needless [illegible] school said that would never [illegible] job. People thought I [illegible] school days dyslexia was unheard of. People with dyslexia cannot express themselves on paper and [illegible] cannot but give me a computer with a word processor complete with spell and grammar checker and [illegible] never see me writing notes on paper. [illegible] TV programme about being Dyslexic and the general opinion was that people who are dyslexic [illegible] more [illegible] but. Would challenge this point. If you were to ask me to write an essay on paper I would break out into a sweat!

PM: Ja. I have 2 fighters and [illegible]

PM: The ideas for game[illegible] They [illegible] that I design games [illegible] may come up with the [illegible] but then a team will [illegible] have [illegible] game designer is Peter Molyneux, that is unfair

PM: [illegible] so much clearer. People can [illegible] is an incredibly rewarding [illegible]

PM: [illegible] I [illegible] a [illegible] I shall wake up and think [illegible] been incredibly lucky. Being [illegible] right place at the right time.

PM: [illegible] about [illegible]

PM: [illegible] understand this but we do! Strangely [illegible] being this purposely, [illegible] in a straightforward way [illegible] people. They get lot from the [illegible] bought it [illegible]

PM: [illegible] is drunk is different and I speak from personal [illegible] make me angry. It does annoy when [illegible] a dinner party you mention you write games people look at you with glazed eyes and say really? Then I will go and get another [illegible]

PM: [illegible]

PM: [illegible] always wanted to create a game with a single [illegible] the [illegible] of the player [illegible] been asked who is the person in such and such a game. Every time I have said you play through the levels, etc. [illegible] have the [illegible] never [illegible]

[illegible] engine. [illegible] spend [illegible] when people know I [illegible] now I have a pseudonym and I still use ICQ. I tend to steer clear of the pop[illegible] sometimes be [illegible] The Internet [illegible] brilliant [illegible] change but on [illegible] I will get even [illegible] Can't vote [illegible] the most [illegible] Christmas shopping [illegible] version, understand [illegible] I could not be asked [illegible] buy a starry starry night pillow, logged on to the site and it took me an hour and a half to order. I could have taken over to the [illegible] in less time. I believe the Internet is a bigger cultural change than we now realise. How it will [illegible] will play a [illegible]

PM: [illegible] Black & White [illegible]

PM: [illegible] are seen and [illegible]

PM: A Nissan Skyline a Lotus [illegible] an Aston Martin. Why an Aston Martin? Yes I [illegible] James Bond car but [illegible] like its temperamental [illegible] also has some [illegible] I could be going at 80 mph and a lot of a sudden it would slow [illegible] TV car presenter called Jeremy Clarkson [illegible] to the US to actually [illegible] a chance [illegible] Aston Martin is the car I bought it and [illegible]

PM: [illegible] Planet 9990 a science fiction [illegible] Blade Runner or Beauty and the Beast.

PM: Sleigh.

PM: The computer g[illegible] but it will be someday, despite what people are saying. I believe that 80% of the people will [illegible] like PS2 [illegible] entertainment boxes will be a new perception of the [illegible] TV. [illegible] a very [illegible] I enjoy the most like the early silent movies. When [illegible] start to see it become mass market? I ask the question with a film you have the beginning, a minutes, the middle and the end, but [illegible] where people become [illegible] immersed in the characters and the plot. With a game you have characters that are here for months so when you get someone to write a [illegible] the emotion [illegible] where the gaming industry really takes off.

PM: [illegible] programmes. With spare time and a love for games [illegible] the rest is now history.

PM: I spend [illegible] and [illegible]

The look of the game with its manga-spiced graphics is in the style of Resident Evil and one that is viewed as a real epic to have you on the edge of your seat. The plot is very closely based on the Akira film and you take the part of Rion who is unwillingly being tested on in a laboratory.

Derek dela Fuente

GALERIANS

Rion is an extremely gifted young man. He is blessed with telepathic powers that have helped him through many a scrape, but now everything's gone horribly wrong. Trapped in a world of drugs, chimeras and nightmares, Rion must lead the battle for Good against Evil in the high-rise slums of the Japanese Metropolis set 500 years in the future. The game starts as you see Rion strapped down in the lab but using your mind power you break free and now is your chance to escape. The essential feature of the game is that as the hero you can use your psychic abilities to open things and move objects. The game has some really clever graphics and features. If you by chance find a mirror, looking into it will give you some flashback of what has happened and some short segments of what is about to happen helping the player get a real fix on the plot line. Having lost your memory trying to find out what has happened is a part of your objective, why you have been experimented on, and this gradually comes back via the unfolding story. All you really know at the start is that you are in a lab and must escape!

The player will also constantly hear a girl's voice throughout the game which in itself is a part of the solution to the whole game. Galerians is a massive game, hence it coming on 3 CDs, and the laboratory section which is three levels - equates to one floor in Resident Evil. The PR person for Crave was at pains to point out

some of the features that made it a better experience than Resident Evil. There you had to watch your ammo and pretty much up front there is

lity to the game as you must heed what you do. For instance, dotted around the locations are chemicals that you will find and be able to take but pop too many and it will drive you crazy and you must search for a quick fix tablet that will calm things down. The chemicals equate to adding abilities but using them properly and not in one mad rush is part of succeeding in the game.

Getting out of the lab and making your way to the mansion you will be confronted by some shady characters and their attacking moves are impressive, having some of the abilities you have! At the end of the level is a tasty confrontation with a cyborg, Crave, "The game mixes a [illegible] styles - fighting, action, exploration and plenty of puzzles, many of which are quite intelligent. Of course things will gradually get harder so at the start you may need to find a fuse to turn on the lights but later on things really start to become devious. Most other games are too obvious. We believe the game is very intellectual."

Rion has two kinds of psychic abilities, the offensive where you can take chemicals, which give you sonic blasts, or the triangle button where you will be able to sense things, which is more defensive. On screen info and icons are on display to allow the player to [illegible] which strengths are high and which are low. All the weapons are in Rion's mind so the game is quite clever using physic mind power. You will actually see this power manifest in action. For instance if you want to fireball you will summon this via your mind although this actual action, one of the many, may be toned down for the European release to effect each chemical you find will give you a power and the more of the chemical you take will heighten the ability even more, so you must really use them with care. As the game has already been released in Japan, the process making it European is a very long one and there is a chance that some details of the game might change. Some censorship of the game whilst it is being converted is already underway. Taking chemicals via injection is out for it may convey the drug culture so it will be done via screen meters. Also no heads exploding with blood but sparks when you overload with chemicals.

Crave commented that any changes will not give the game less impact as the story line, battles, and look are already very strong. Experience a gripping PlayStation adventure that you won't be able to put down. ASCII's top programmers have created a 3D epic that will freeze the blood in your veins. Moulded into the dynamic action sequences of the gameplay, Galerians offers a breath-taking story line that gives no peace to the player.

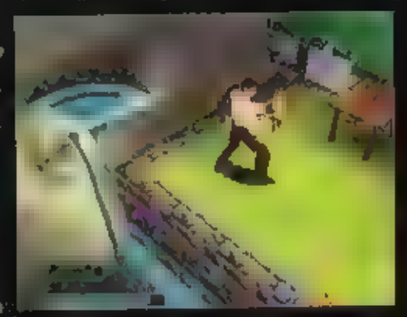
PlayStation PREVIEWS

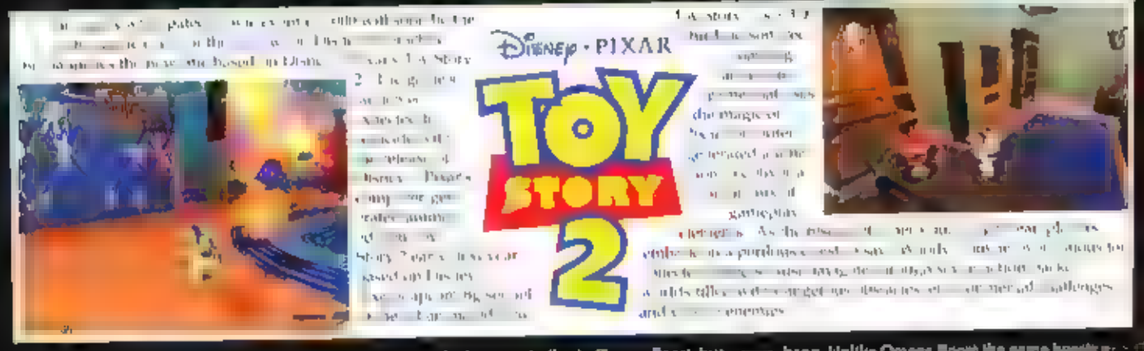
VIGILANTE 8 2nd OFFENSE

GOD BLESS THE RING

EZ EHRGEIZ

You've got ten seconds to correctly pronounce the name, Ehrgeiz. Tough nut to crack that one, the worst part is trying to tell your friends how much butt you kicked last night while playing your new game. They'll probably just get stuck on the name and quickly forget your triumphant hara blowing while asking you, 'what game, say that again?' That's just the name, not very important, what is important is that it's from the Final Fantasy people and it's starting to look like Ehrgeiz is going to be the next big thing. The game is an arcade fighting game with a smattering of role playing elements, basically it's like Tekken combined with a cut down version of any recent Final Fantasy game. The tale behind the game begins 50 years ago where a mysterious weapon, (known simply as Ehrgeiz) made from an unknown material is found in the remains of an ancient German castle. It eventually was presented to the winner of a tournament that determined the world's greatest fighter. In the game players will find themselves fighting to save the world, exploring ruins for the secret of immortality and testing their skills in fighting contests. What makes the game all that much more special is the varied array of characters, all bringing something different to the table. For example take Yoko Kishibojin, a young 17-year old girl skilled in martial arts and the use of a deadly yo-yo. Next up we have Han Daehan, a 23-year old action movie star from Korea who uses his artificial leg to fire missiles at unsuspecting opponents. As an extra bonus the game also features characters from the Final Fantasy VII game world, three of which are available immediately and three that must be unlocked. The straight up fighting mode of the game features a new engine that allows for full 3D movement anywhere in the arena regardless of where your opponent is and generates some lightning fast battles with large well defined characters. The fighting mode will include four mini games, Battle Panel, a strategy style game, Battle Beach, a barefoot race requiring insanely quick button presses and finally Infinity Battle, an endurance based fighting game. So the final line up has 9 arcade modes, 4 mini-games and a stand alone role playing game where you play as archeologist descending into a dungeon on a quest to find the spring of eternal life. There are two modes to the quest game, normal mode where you can return to the village to purchase weapons and equipment and the hard mode where you enter the dungeon and can only return when you find eternal life. So far, Final looks all like title only impressed with its many game modes and slick fighting engine, if all goes well it might just be the game mixing title that all others are judged by in future. [NAG]





SPACE DEBRIS

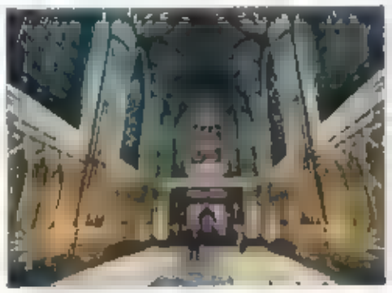
It seems the Earth is quite a popular target in the future and wherever we see a slice of life in the near future it's a warred and tatty place that's either sinking under the weight of its own problems or under attack from above. Fortunately there is always some hero type just waiting in the wings to be discovered and save the day, just in time, again. This time around that hero is James Bryant, a crack pilot in the UED (United Earth Defence) who has to mobilise a fighting force to deal with the imminent attack by alien cells have just entered our solar system. Bryant must lead an advanced force to engage the enemy and draw them out. The UED fleet soon make contact with the enemy as is quickly overcome by superior firepower, forced to retreat and regroup. Somehow Bryant is left stranded behind enemy lines, before he can even consider his options he receives a distress signal from a nearby UED research outpost where he meets Dr. Baird. With a little help from the doctor Bryant must now put an end to this alien invasion even if it means sacrificing his own body. Space Debris is a fast paced 3D action shooter, played in the third person the game spreads the pain across ten levels all featuring their own geography and level end bosses. The game looks very similar to Omega Boost, but does promise to offer more variation in play with a greater number of environments and a solid story. From the early release version, the emphasis is very clearly on action and the evolving story, as one section is completed a full motion video sequence kicks in and gives purpose to the upcoming battle. The way the video sequences complement the action is an approach that works well and you really feel that the fate of mankind rests in your sweaty palm. There will be a total of six different craft you can play with, including a huge mechanised robot and the highly classified Phoenix, a man machine hybrid that was outlawed after trial experiments went bang. Unlike Omega Boost the game boasts a wide variety of combat environments and players will get to travel through space, explore talk space stations and even find themselves flying through craters and valleys. One unique feature worth mentioning are the giant bosses in the game, some of them are so massive that their entire bulk won't fit on a single screen. Space Debris is looking really [illegible] and [illegible] player modes) the game has [illegible] sure to prolong its life. This title promises to be a must for the action fan, but if you tire quickly of repetitive shooting at aliens then you might be better off looking at something else. [NAG]

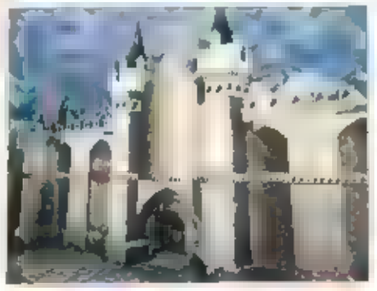
Wheel of Time

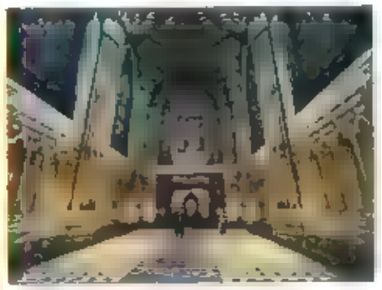
Legend Entertainment has been developing games based on fantasy and science fiction worlds for around ten years, covering authors such as Piers Anthony (Xanth), Terry Brookes (Shannarah) and Spider Robinson (Callaghans Crosstime Saloon). Apart from being in the same stable regarding content, all those games were adventures, a genre the company is moving away from. Wheel of Time, due for release in January 2000 from GT Interactive (the publisher who bought Legend last December), is one of a series of books by fantasy writer Robert Jordan, a man who's novels make War and Peace seem like a flyer. The first of the eight tome series, Eye of the Behorder, stretched to 800 pages whilst subsequent offerings are a shelf bending 1,000 pages. In his collection, Jordan has created a very detailed world that Glen Dahlgren, a designer for Legend, wanted to turn into a game.

Derek dela Fuente

Genre: First Person Shooter (PC)
Developer: Legend Entertainment
Publisher: GT Interactive
Supplier: Crow tel: (011) 233-1111 Expected Release Date: Dec/Jan 2000
Internet http://www.gtinteractive.com







Quick Facts

DEREK DELA FUENTE

Many see this action come realistic war game as one of Activision's most eagerly awaited titles. Its explosive action and varied missions ensure this is a game that both arcade gamers and even strategy fans will love. NAG spoke with Ken Hoekstra at Raven to get an in-depth insight into the title!

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

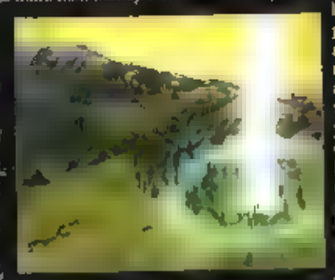
Genre	Realistic War Game (PC)
Developer	Raven Software
Publisher	Activision
Support	MMW SDD
Tel	(011) 315-1000
Expected Release Date	Early 2000
Website	http://www.activision.com

Black & White

Black & White is a game that is possibly going to be the biggest game ever. It is due for release around March 2000 and will encompass multiplayer and single player versions, as well as a surprise package. With its outstanding looks, it is full of new and inventive ideas. It has ground breaking Artificial Intelligence. The animation will shame every developer you could mention. There is an in-game cast that will captivate, along with a central creature that you will learn to love. Black & White is a game that is easy to play but deep and thought provoking. One wonders what will be next. Peter Molyneux gives his own insight into the total experience.

Derek dela Fuente

Strangely a lot is riding on the back of Black & White and it is more than money. Peter and his team have put their heart and soul into Black & White. Peter Molyneux is the inspiration behind the game but a team of experts is also showing how important it is to have talent that complements Peters. From the animator to the person doing the AI, many new benchmarks are about to be made when you eventually see and play Black & White. Because the game is so different, a lot of conflicting reports have been written about it. It is not a GOD game, a role playing game, or a real time strategy experience. But, as Peter explained in detail, 'I was purposefully



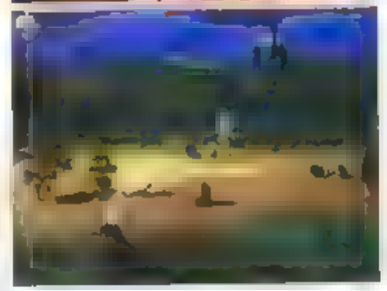
story, was. Many people have made their own interpretation. This is our first game so it has to be original, innovative, but the key point is that this is not a God game, nor real time strategy, it is in fact an RPG where you play the role of a God. Within the story everything that is presented to you, you can choose to deal with in whatever way you like. You can choose when you are presented with the world, with all the little people running around living their own lives, creating their own community, to be wonderfully kind and caring to them or you can be unspeakably mean and evil.' The first shot you get of the game is from a spire-topped citadel located in a remote corner of the game-world, as you survey the surrounding 3D landscape. In technical terms, the game-world is constructed using Lionhead's revolutionary new, fully scalable, rotating, environment-mapped, modifiable landscape with an engine giving through-the-eye vision, bump mapping, light sourcing and reflections.

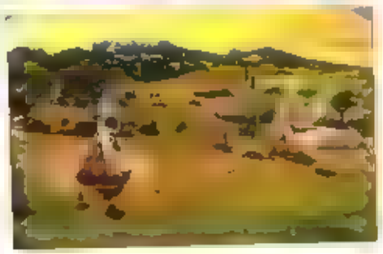
Black & White offers the freedom that has been highlighted in that different people see the game in differing ways. What we have done is to construct a simulation of a world and around this we have wrapped a story that unfolds and will change slightly depending how you play. A story that centres on the most important facet of the game - the idea that early on you will find this little creature which you are able to nurture and see grow up and give whatever personality you want to. You can teach your creature anything you wish. You can turn him into a rampaging murdering mass killing machine or you can make him benevolently kind and caring. It is that freedom in the game that makes it quite unique. It is the actual story that is being kept unclear because to give this away would spoil the whole game. That explaining the game in detail will give the user a real insight into what they can expect.'

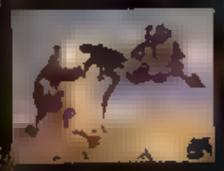
Quizzed on the story a little deeper Peter

up, 'All of the games I have previously written have absolutely no story other than something we have tacked on at the end. Look at Dungeon Keeper, you are a bad guy, and things just get 'bad'. Populous, Powermonger, Theme Park, again, no story, even Syndicate was very weak in plot line. It occurred to me that if we were writing a game wouldn't it be fantastic to approach it from a story perspective in single player form. You play through the story and as you play you improve but at any point in the story you can leave the story, take your creature (another central facet of the game that I will explain shortly) that you have developed and given a unique personality and place it online. You then place this creature against others in a new world where it will continue to learn and you can then take your creature back into your own world from the multiplayer world and continue playing. This again is another aspect that no other game has done before. I want people to enjoy the story in Black & White like no other game has been able to present. I have been inspired by Shigeru Miyamoto who wrote Zelda. Zelda is a game that is really a platform game but it was tied into a sensational story with a compelling story - that was 'bloody' clever. I am trying to do a similar thing.'

Peter's forceful and convincing focus on story line was interesting, however I made the point that a story line is fine but only when you can achieve emotion in a game, real empathy with the creatures/cast in a game will it be valid and as yet this has not been achieved. Peter jumped up like a coiled spring! 'Yes... that is one element we are working on. That is the position of mind which we are working on in the game, we want people to care about the creature you control or the little people in the game. If I can make you, convince you to care about it then the story becomes a lot easier. The creature you control in the game is uniquely







The World
All the tribes, every town and village has their own AI routines so the world will carry on regardless of you, the player. You can watch the little people get married, go hunting, build homes and play games. What Lionhead has tried to do is simulate a tribal culture but without war.

Peter as Inspiration
I would say that there was some inspiration from Little Computer People. I loved the family and their [illegible] creature that you can give any personality you [illegible] with the world makes him the real star of the show; you can create an evil killing machine or a benevolent Mother Teresa figure.

Help!
A feature of the help system will be two characters, an angel and a devil, which will give you advice. For example, if you are poised with a lightning bolt in your hand the devil will recommend that you cast it and destroy everything in it's path, while the angel will remind you that destruction is wrong. The final choice will be up to you.

Silicon Network - 3D Engine
In order to create more lifelike characters, a theoretically slimmer system of linked animations and interpolations is being utilised. This makes a seemingly simple animation, such as bending over and picking something up, quite complex; we're going to have to adjust things for different ground levels. There will be combinations of different animations so that you can have an animation of reaching here and another animation of reaching there. And if there is a point anywhere in the middle, the different properties of these animations are combined.

Single Player - Multiplayer
The single-player game is planned as an open-ended set of events based in a persistent world. There will be no 'levels,' just an expanding playing area for you to try to dominate. And the single-player and multiplayer games will be interchangeable, allowing you to take your creature back and forth between the two. Also there will be an amazing 'Gathering' which could be free where your creatures can chat and fight other creatures when you are online.

Genre: Virtual Pet / RPG / Other [PC]

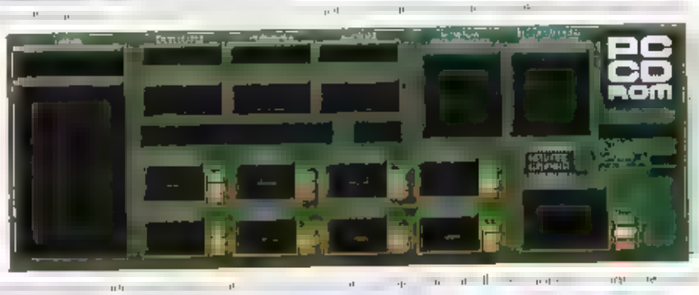
Developer: Lionhead Studios

Publisher: Electronic Arts

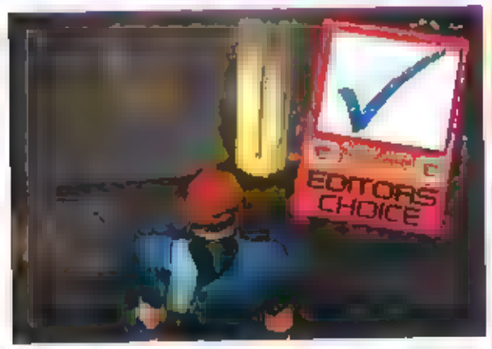
Supplier: Electronic Arts Africa
Tel: (011) 803 1212
Expected Release Date: March 2000

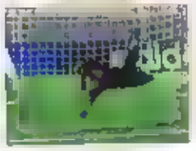
Web Site:
http://www.lionhead.co.uk

Everything Changes



Awards Ceremony





FIFA 2000 Page

Nocturne Page

Pharaoh Page

Final Fantasy VIII Page

The best Playstation game ever [illegible]

Evaluation System

90 - 100

The ultimate achievement for a game. It is on par with the "Ultimate" of all. It represents an outstanding game that [illegible] you enjoy this type of game in other. Also a game [illegible] if you [illegible] of this kind of game you would [illegible] order your [illegible] 2000.

80 - 89

Any game in this range is a great game. Great in every way. It is [illegible] this range. [illegible] but still [illegible] very [illegible] and [illegible] you'll [illegible]

70 - 79

Very [illegible] game. [illegible] good [illegible] game that [illegible] of the [illegible] Good [illegible] from [illegible] visual. Text [illegible] flawless but [illegible] very [illegible]

60 - 69

Good [illegible] usually [illegible] Combination [illegible] flaws [illegible] features or [illegible] these [illegible] [illegible] the game will probably have [illegible]

50 - 59

Middle of the road [illegible] are average games [illegible] good and too bad. [illegible] those usually [illegible] your [illegible] Mocking [illegible] well meaning but [illegible] grandparent.

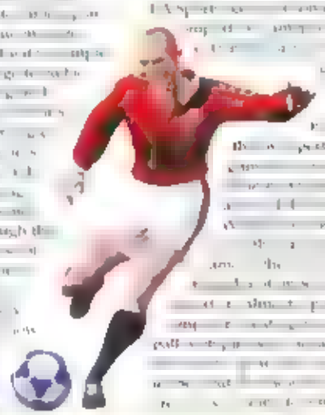
40 - 49

Very poor games in [illegible] single. [illegible] They may be but redeemed [illegible] dropping into the [illegible] market. Something [illegible] a look [illegible] Rom's what they [illegible]

0 - 39

Any game scoring this dreadful [illegible] [illegible] by [illegible] bit. Avoid [illegible] completely. Go [illegible] the [illegible] and these games just keep getting worse [illegible] little. Scoring in the single digits [illegible] good for a [illegible] get 20% for doing something right [illegible]

It's another year, another season, more advances, more mistakes, and more money to be made. FIFA is the most successful sports franchise in modern day history and deservedly so. Its dedication to exacting the rules and regulation of the sport and creating one of the most realistic sports simulations on PC and PlayStation is a wondrous feat and we can only tip our hats in admiration. But with the success of FIFA 99 could the next generation stand up to the high standards set by its predecessor?



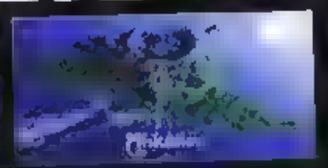
At the options screen, enter any of the following:

Code	Effect
[illegible]	[illegible]

Dungeon crawling and forest lurking with a little town talking and buying are all very good descriptive phrases to illustrate what Revenant is all about. It's a hack and slash role-playing game that features you, playing a resurrected warrior, with a bad attitude.

RedTide

REVENANT



There was a time on the planet Ur when things were good, but times change, gods grow bored and jealous, and ultimately wars break out. In Revenant this destructive course of events is referred to as the Cataclysm and thousands of years ago it literally tore the world of Ur apart with dark magic, evil creatures and thousands of lost souls. The gods eventually abandoned their creation, and now Ur stands barren and scored. Today, the effects of the Cataclysm still shape and affect the people, land, and creatures of Ur, in particular the small island community of Akhiulon and their leader Lord Tendrick of the House of Averam. The character you play will arrive in this dismal setting to save the day, rescue the damsel, and discover himself. Yes are Locke D'Averam, the revenant. You died over a thousand years ago and have now just been resurrected from the dead by the powerful sorcerer, Sardak as a 'warrior slave'. You have taken the name of the house you serve and are compelled to obey, for now... (The summoning spell compels you to do their bidding). The reason Lord Tendrick and his sorcerer brought you back from Anserak (an eternal hell) is made clear from the onset, there is an evil cult threatening to take over the town and you must stop them, they've already kidnapped Lord Tendrick's daughter, adding another complication to your task. You once were a great warrior, but cannot remember your past, it will come back to you as will your fighting skills, but now you must go and do your master's bidding...

Hack and Slash

Revenant is a Hack and Slash role-playing game, one of many games in this brave new genre, the role playing bit is loosely defined as talking to different characters with branching conversations, buying weapons and armour and having character attributes, called 'statistics' in this particular case. The hack and slash bit is derived from the fact that you must pick up this big sword here, go over to that monster there, and do a little hacking and slashing until either you or it are what meat chefs call mince meat. This violent monster bashing activity happens most of the time in Revenant and largely defines what the game is all about. The odd thing here is that the game almost seems as if it should have something more to it, but never delivers and when it's all over you're left wondering about certain instances or things characters said. It's almost as if the game was designed to be much bigger than it turned out. The other aspect to the game is magic... while you play Revenant you'll discover magical talismen that when combined in a specific way give you the ability to cast different spells. For example if you combine the Water and Earth talismen, you'd probably cast a swamp spell. These talisman combinations are written in ancient scrolls scattered throughout the game world, particularly in wooden chests and on the floor in the dungeon modules. This flexibility can't touch the sheer number of character classes in other games but is great and should suit almost any casual role-player. As you play your character does become more proficient in certain areas, such as strength, mind and agility so you must decide early on if you prefer to use magic or metal to defeat creatures. As you increase in experience certain selectable attributes are improved, you have the opportunity to decide which ones are to be increased when you level up and you can change these any time during the game. The best combination seems to be the jack of all trades approach, keeping your blade sharp for close encounters and your mind agile for magic spells.

AS YOU CAN SEE, MAGIC IS GOING TO BE POINTING A FINGER, AND LAUNCHING AN THE GRAPHICS IS FANTASTIC

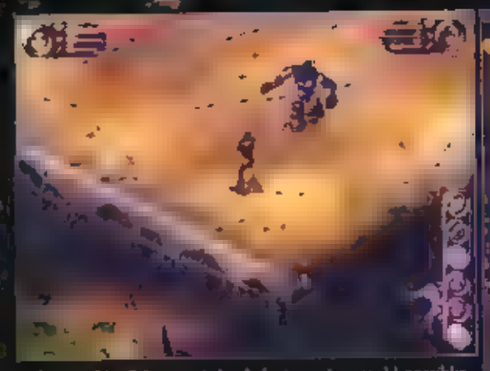
Mutilate and carve

The action is viewed from an isometric angle with the camera centred on the main character at all times. The game's graphics are crisp and well defined right down to the last blade of grass... well almost. The main character is large as are the wide variety of creatures lurking about in the game. The size is great for visual stimulation but does tend to be a problem when you have all your option panels open. With all the different windows open the playing area is drastically reduced and one can't help thinking that the developers could have designed them a little better, or made them smaller. This is a minor point however because a simple key press takes all the menus away leaving you with a full screen to play in. There are a number of different locations you'll play in including the Town of Mist Haven, the forest (a huge area encompassed by the ocean), various bone yards and an enormous dungeon. In the town you'll meet many different non-player characters, some will talk to you, others are wary of this resurrected stranger and some will try and sell you anything from potions to armour. Travelling around in the town requires a little patience largely due to the fact that every time you enter a building the game pauses to load. This loading takes time and when multiplied by every building in the town and any locations within these buildings you're looking at quite a chunk of time. There are options to increase cache sizes and overall loading performance but fiddling with these settings didn't alleviate much of the waiting. Once you've finished your business in the town it's into the forest and your first battle. Not too long after entering the forest you'll more than likely run into a giant spider, which should be hacked or slashed. Your character has two stances, normal and combat, the combat stance will automatically kick in when facing any danger, and from there the simple method of furiously clicking your mouse button should eliminate the undead. As you progress through the game things don't stay that simple for long and you'll have to use your head as well as the different types of attack and defence options to survive. Initially you have a set number of attack options but as you increase your character level you can return to the town and learn new fighting moves from your tutor. The basic fighting controls are simple to use and well implemented so there's no time wasting while you desperately search for the 'right' combination. The game offers a number of controller options but it's probably best to use the mouse seeing that you'll need to navigate through the menus anyway. In summary the game controls well, looks good, and offers enough variation in locales and foes to keep most players entertained.

AND HE STILL WONDERS WHY EVERYONE JUMPED AWAY

The many changes

Revenant is a good game with many good attributes but it is important to highlight all the problems especially in light of the fact that many games falling into the same genre are due for release this month and in the New Year. The first gripe centres on the constant loading, just as you become engrossed in something the game halts and the next bit of the map is loaded into memory, these 'loads' average out to around three seconds, which could really be overlooked if they didn't interrupt play so often. From an aesthetic point of view this interrupts the flow of the game and totally destroys any atmosphere the artists were trying to create, it seems that just as you become engrossed in something interesting, the game stops to load, again! From a gameplay point of view you occasionally have to endure this loading while being chased by a creature and often when the action comes back on-line you're facing the wrong way or are just about to be killed. It's annoying and does damage the title on a number of different levels. One other oversight on the part of the developers is the multiplayer game, it reeks of a quick cheap knock together effort, but the good news is that it allows you to play as one of four different characters. There are custom maps on offer but the whole concept just lacks any cohesion and it's doubtful that Revenant multiplayer is going to take the world by storm. The game is big and has more to offer than any review could possibly tell, the story is great and develops as the game progresses, aimed in such a way that you simply have to find out what will happen in the end. The combat interface works well but should have been a little smaller, fighting and moving through the game world is easy and requires very little effort. If you add up all the good points and tackle the game for what it is then you shouldn't be disappointed. If you enjoy the odd dungeon crawl, fancy yourself as a part-time sorcerer or warrior and want to rid the world of all that is evil, then Revenant should satisfy.



THESE PANELS HOLD PLENTY OF INFORMATION FROM THE SPELLS, POTIONS, WEAPONS, ARMOUR, ETC. YOU CAN ACCESS THEM ALL, IT'S JUST A MATTER OF PUTTING THE RIGHT PANEL ON THE RIGHT SLOT BEFORE THE

ONE OF THE MANY SPECIAL EFFECTS

Role-Playing Game

In the end man is little more that you'd expect. The game world is varied enough to be engrossed right up till the end and it's fun to play, you couldn't ask for more.

Sound	Originality	Playability	Graphics	Overall
88	79	90	80	83

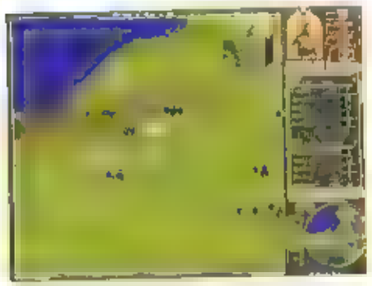
92 83 81 71

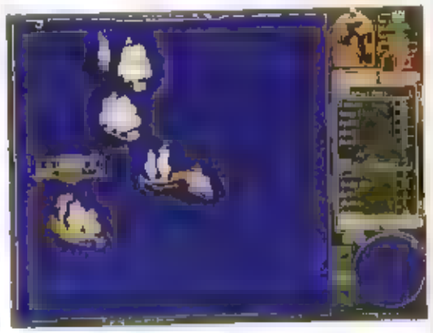
PC CD ROM

NEW AGE GAMING

Cutthroats

The acrid stench of fired gunpowder assails your nostrils, while the sound of splitting timber fills your ears. Your eyes sting from smoke and salt spray, your muscles ache from battling both wind driven seas and bloodthirsty enemies. All around you the screams of the wounded and dying fill the air and the deck is slippery with the spilled blood. You summon up your strength, staggering to your feet, fingers limply curled around the hilt of a cutlass. Looking up you see them swarming over the railing, hordes of pirates hungry for gold, plunder and murder. You have no other option but to steel yourself for their approach.





ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM — BLASTER PC

Genre: Pirate Management	Developer: Hot House Creations	Publisher: Sales	Crew: (011) 233-1117	Minimum: Pentium 166 MHz, 32 MB Ram, 8 X CD Ram, 2 MB Video Card, 700 MB HD, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Recommended: Pentium 233 MHz, 32 MB Ram, 24 X CD Ram, 4 MB AGP Video Card, 700+ MB HD, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0)	PC CD ROM
Cutthroats is a really fun pirate management game which allows the player to rise to notoriety as the Scourge of the High Seas and build a huge fleet of scurvy sea dogs. However, technical weaknesses will probably relegate this one to the back of the cupboard for the vast majority of what is a very fickle, very picky market.	Systems Research Genetics	Good Management, Highly Addictive	Poor Graphics, Confusing Gameplay	http://www.sales.com	R 299.00	Shryke

Graphics	Sound	Gameplay	Longevity	Overall
55	71	70	77	70
67	62	75	82	

NEW AGE GAMING

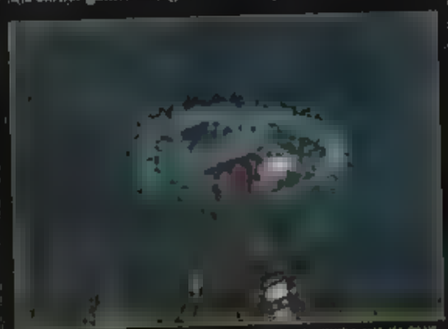
Prince of Persia 3D is the third in a series that dates back to 1990. In this, the latest adventure the young prince once again has to save his beloved princess, this time from the clutches of the evil King Assan and his son Rugnor who wishes to kill the prince and marry the princess himself. Set in an impressive 3D world you will need both speed and agility if you wish to survive the many devious traps that the King has set for you.

Prince of Persia 3D

Persia is a place that conjures up images of mystical palaces, bandits, and beautiful princesses, of magic and enchantments filled with intrigue and adventure. In the game, Prince of Persia, the developers have managed to capture the essence of this fantastic land and have produced a truly fun game that will have you glued to your system for days. Although the game features no multiplayer capabilities, it has a strong story line, features excellent gameplay and includes all the eye candy that one expects from a top-class game these days.

Tomb Raider?

Prince of Persia 3D is the third in a series by Broderbund that dates back to 1990 and one that I played extensively. As with the earlier versions, it is a platform game that in 3D form comes close to Lara Croft in Tomb Raider, except it doesn't include her curvaceous character of course. Instead, you play the hero, one-time beggar and now Prince of Persia and married to the princess - daughter of the Sultan. The story of how you came to be the Prince is told in the earlier games and goes something like this.



THERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF THE FREE LOOK WITH ME IN THE WATER AFTER I FELL OFF THE BLUFF.

While the Sultan was away fighting the enemies of the kingdom, the princess fell in love with the hero of our story. Unfortunately for him, the Sultan's grand vizier and court magician Jaffar had other plans that included marrying the princess and making the kingdom for himself. To get you out of the way the vizier had the hero thrown in prison from where you had to escape through a maze of passages filled with deadly traps and armed prison guards. As you progressed through the dungeon the traps became more challenging and ingenious.

These included the good old-fashioned spike trap, saw traps and collapsing floors. Although the game was played in VGA at 640 x 480, the graphics were considered good for its time. After having saved the princess and defeated Jaffar, the Sultan returns and rewards you with the princess as your bride. You get married and settle down to conjugal bliss for about eleven days when Jaffar returns and casts an enchantment and takes on the guise of the prince while you are made to look like a beggar. In your enchanted form neither the Sultan nor the princess recognise you and you are forced to flee and slave away on a merchant ship. However, Jaffar calls up a storm and you find yourself wrecked on a desert island with the only way out through secret caverns filled with deadly traps. In the second game the developers have added some perspective and more ingenious traps but it remains a 2D-platform game. After having defeated Jaffar for the second time life returns to normal and you settle down to life at the palace. Sometime thereafter, the Sultan's brother, King Assan invites the Sultan and his family to visit his kingdom. This is where the third game begins. During a feast, reserved for the men, Assan's men attack and throw you in the dungeon. It seems that the Sultan had, sometime before, promised Assan that his son would marry the princess and the king intends to make sure that the Sultan sticks to his word. Fighting off unwanted suitors seems to be your lot in life and while most of us would probably question the sense in sticking around, the hero has no choice in the matter - anyway it's a fun adventure. The game begins with you being tossed into a prison cell. Fortunately there is a secret door that you can push open. It lets you into a passage from where you can escape. A room to your left reveals two prisoners chained to the wall. If you talk to them they will give you some hints about escaping from the dungeon. The view is over the shoulder and feels a lot like Tomb Raider but also the prince can't prance around like Lara Croft, but is restricted to fairly conventional moves (though, that said, he is able to jump about twice his own height). After escaping from the prison cell your first priority is to find a sword but you'll have to make your way through most of the first level before you get lucky (what, with the princess or the guards? Ed). The key to surviving on the first level is to look in unlikely places for magic potions and clues and to save often.

Unlike the earlier versions, the game is quite interactive and you can activate and search various objects in the game world. Character movement is also quite unrestricted and you can climb up ropes to traverse sheer walls. One thing about the prince, he sure is tough and can hang by his hands indefinitely. He can leap across a 10 metre gap and slam into the opposite wall while managing to hang onto a narrow ledge by his fingers (I can't help thinking that the prince is going to have one real flat nose at the end of the game). There are limitations, however, and the developers won't let you climb around corners, if they had it would make many of the puzzles easier to solve. The default movement is running but you can make the prince walk by using the shift key and is something I'd recommend unless you can see the way is clear. As with the previous games PoP3D is filled with nasty traps, like blades that swing out from the wall and chop your head off, or camouflaged buttons on the floor that fire arrows at you. Unfortunately you can't avoid trying out all buttons as they obscure a door that you need to get through. There are also collapsing floors and prison guards watching for you that you'll need to avoid. The game is divided into a number of levels but you can save at anytime. While I can see the sense in this I think it does make the game a bit too easy. In [illegible] had to play from the beginning whenever you started and only had 60 minutes to finish the game, in Prince 2 you could only save at the beginning of each level although they were not very long.

THE FIGHT GIVES NEW MEANING TO THE DUNGEON [illegible] YOU WILL SEE SHARPER PLY[illegible]

Potions and swords

You begin the game with three health points but you will find health blue potions that will keep you going plus bonus health potions that will add extra health points, however these are rare. Combat is important and you will need to fight your way through the game. There are 30 different types of enemies (six basic types) using a variety of weapons. New in this game are the additional weapons that you will be able to use. These include a sword, staff, assassin double blades, and bow with a number of different arrow types. I found the combat system good and very versatile although a little easy in the early levels. I'm not a Mortal Combat fan and the prince certainly doesn't have as many moves.

(only three attacking and three defensive moves) but the AI is pretty clever and you can often confuse the enemy by darting back or to the side, which will put him off. Damage varies according to the weapon and where you strike the enemy or have hit yourself. You don't have to fight everyone you come across, however, I noticed that guards seldom leave their post to follow you. The bow is one of my favourite weapons and you will also use it to do more than shoot enemies but I won't spoil it, you can discover it for yourself. Graphics are good, although some of the scenes lack the complexity that you might be familiar with in Unreal. But the rendering of the water and effects while swimming and when fighting are better than in any game I have ever played. Characters are okay but not wonderful but they make up for it by moving and fighting in a realistic manner. All the while the camera position is good and feels very natural, offering a clear view. The camera position changes for each weapon while fighting. For the sword it is low and to your character's right giving you a clear picture of the combat, while for the bow it moves directly behind the prince for you to position the sights on the enemy. With all the climbing you also spend a lot of time falling and here the camera work is almost cinematic.

A SUDDEN [illegible] CHANGE FROM LEAPING [illegible] TO HANGING THROUGH [illegible]

Although the graphics and gameplay have changed, PoP3D feels very similar to the earlier games. One of the reasons for this is that the developers have kept the same control options and limit the user to keyboard or gamepad only. While this might sound like a major restriction - it isn't and you will find that you can move very quickly and more accurately when you could using a mouse. In summary an excellent title that will have a major appeal to any 3D action adventure fan or those looking to try something different.

Prince of Persia in those days

ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM

BLASTER PC

Action Adventure

Prince of Persia 3D is a really enjoyable game that will appeal to all the Tomb Raider fans out there and especially anyone who has played the earlier two Prince of Persia games - for you this game is a must.

COMPARATIVES: Tomb Raider Menace 2 Indiana Jones

PROS: Reviews Page Graphics Good Story

CONS: Not Enough Interaction Character Development Limited Moves

http://www.pop3d.com

$ 299.00

Pentium II 266 MHz, 64 MB Ram, 8 X CD Rom, 8 MB AGP Video Card, 2/48 MB HD, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0)

PC CD ROM

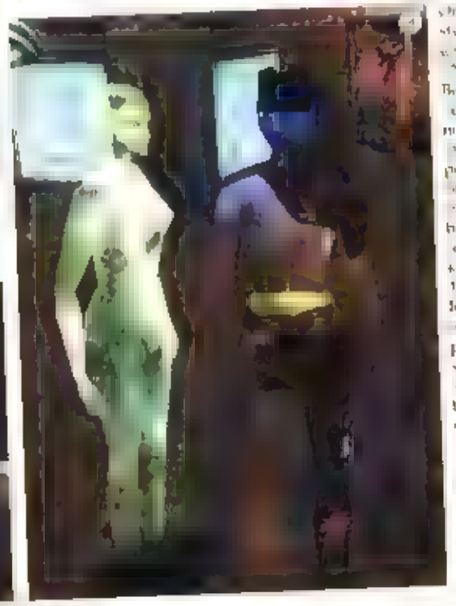
Sound	Graphics	Playability	Longevity	Overall
81	80	88	85	84

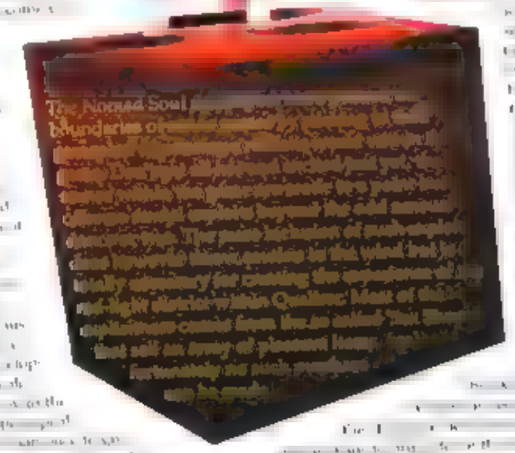
90 88 83 77

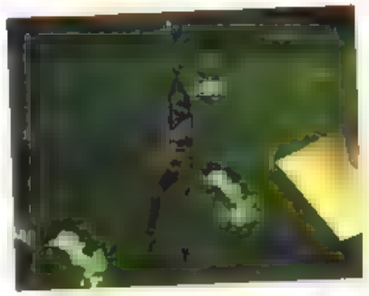
NEW AGE GAMING

The action adventure genre has undergone so many facelifts over the years that it could teach Michael Jackson a thing or two about cosmetics. But as we evolve into better and more constructive gamers we are challenging the talents of the developers to test our resilience and abilities. Unexpectedly we are being taken head on by a crowd of determined and adventurous developers from Quantic Dreams and Eidos Interactive, who are steadfast in their belief that gaming should be more than a virtual experience, but an ambiguous realisation of true life - and how close they've come.

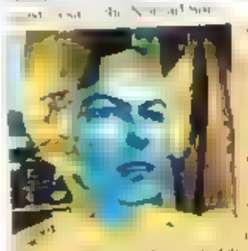
The Nomad Soul







REVIEWS UNDER FIRE



David Bowie unCut

ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM

BLASTER PC

PC CD ROM

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Sales Interactive

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Huge Production Value

Certain AI Problems
Small Graphical Glitches
Is Dull

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http://www.sonicdeal.com

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Storm

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	ENJOYMENT	OVERALL
96	97	92	95	94
92	96	89	92	

NEW AGE GAMING

THE SHADOW HUNTER RETURNS.

HIS FATE FINALLY SEALED.

NOCTURNE

Nocturne is a game that created quite a stir in the NAG offices, even when only the initial teaser screen shots became available. Now, having seen the final product, I can quite honestly say that this is one of the finest pieces of software ever to grace the pages of this publication. It is games like this that make all the hard work worthwhile.

This game is inspired by the pulp horror novels of the 1930's and 40's. It relates the tale of the Stranger, an enigmatic agent for an organisation called the Spookhouse. This organisation hunts down and kills monsters. Vampires, werewolves, zombies - they're all on the list, and the Stranger is the best man for the job.

Presented in four separate chapters, it is a story rife with horror - more than once a strong chill coursed its way down my spine while playing this masterpiece.

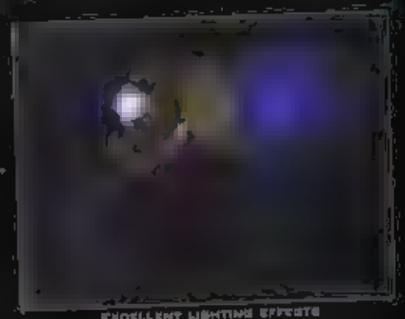
As an agent of Spookhouse, the Stranger travels the world in search of the ostensibly every and evil, and destroys it where ever he finds it. He is single minded in his hatred of all monsters. However, more than this is hard to fathom about him. The game hints very little at his past, or his future (although I predict that a sequel will almost definitely be on the way shortly). With his cowl flapping and his twin pistols, the stranger takes on some of the most horrific creatures generated by the imaginations of pulp fiction writers, all in the name of mankind. He is, despite all the mystery surrounding him, a wonderfully portrayed character. More than once I found myself giggling at the lines he delivers in his deep, emotionless voice. He has an attitude slightly worse than Alibiba the Hun's, and he is not afraid to speak his mind - resulting in some wonderfully "cool" lines issuing from between his lips.

Beneath the rim of his black fedora, his eyes are obscured by dark goggles - the remainder of his craggy face is devoid of emotion, cold and unreadable. His grey coat flaps in the chill wind like the wings of some strange, deranged demon. In his hands, a pair of .45's held with the easy confidence of a competent killer. When he speaks, his words are few, and his voice carries the deep, hollow echo of a tomb. He shows no mercy as he performs his heinous acts of destruction - compassion does not enter his mind as his weapons roar. He is single minded in his purpose, bent on the destruction of his enemies. Nothing will prevent him from completing his task. And he's the good guy...

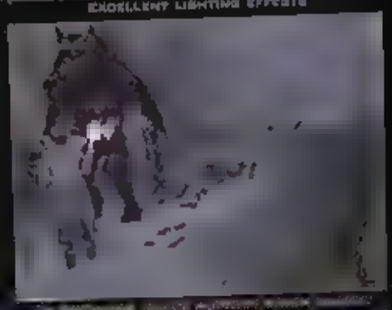
Shryke

One of the most striking aspects of Nocturne is the graphical excellence of the game. The stunning collage of imagery within the game, from the twisted camera angles to the extensive use of muted greys, blacks and browns lends the game a feel unlike any I have seen before. The characters, too, are remarkably well handled, with excellent modelling and a myriad of little touches (frosting breath, flapping coats and the like) which, although not always noticeable, make a huge difference to the entire experience of playing Nocturne.

Unfortunately, the seemingly inescapable problem of clipping does rear its ugly head every now and then, but this, when the quality of the graphics on the whole is taken into account, is very easy to forgive.



EXCELLENT LIGHTING EFFECTS

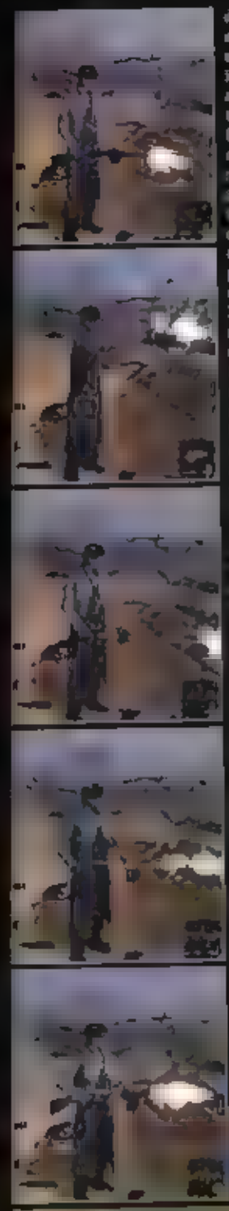


"HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR SKIN DONE SIR?"

Sound breathtaking. With settings ranging from rural Germany to Chicago, small town Texas to Paris, the developers took every advantage and opportunity at presenting stunning settings for the Stranger to appear in. Don't get me wrong - there is nothing pretty about Nocturne. It is, as I said, dark, gloomy and grey. Yet, it is impressive in it's starkness it exists, visually, as a stunning study of bleakness. Another remarkably handled aspect of the game is the sound track and effects. The game is generally very quiet, making use of a long forgotten technique for scaring people silence. Take a look at any horror movie from the black and white era, and see how well it works. The only time you hear music while playing Nocturne is at the most effective times. And then, it is "classic" horror music, relying on the musical elements and nuances that make horror music so unsettling. The sound effects within the game were obviously well considered, too. They were not just included because the game needed sound - the developers made sure that the sound score was perfect. Once again, in this case, God lies in the details. Unless you're really looking out for what makes the sound so special, you don't spot it. But it's there, and the fact that these elements are not obvious proves their brilliance. When action takes place far away, the sounds are quieter, and take a longer time to reach the ears of the "viewer". For example, if the Stranger fires a gun while "far away" in the screen, the sound is played a split second after the gun's muzzle flash is visible. This is no accident, or bad programming. This is a realistic, thought out effect that adds (albeit almost imperceptibly) to the atmosphere of the game.

"I suspect your religious sensibilities might be offended by what I am about to do..." - The Stranger

Which brings me to the third, and possibly most impressive, masterstroke within Nocturne: atmosphere. This game cannot be played during the day. The screen is just too dark. Yet, when played at night, the visual quality improves immeasurably. This, once again, is no accident. Instead of allowing the player the luxury of playing this game at any time, the developers have decided to "force" the player into playing the game in the dark - when everything is all that much more frightening. And frightening it is. The atmosphere is wonderfully thrilling, with well-timed flashes of lightning, glimpses of monsters at just the right moment and an over-



crashed to the whining of the developers and played the game at night, with all the lights out. The game is so enthralling, so engrossing, that I found myself breaking out into a cold sweat more than once, and had to turn the lights on several times to avoid... well, unfortunate accidents involving bodily functions! As a whole, this game is the scariest thing I

we're talking about a person who laughs at even the most frightening horror movies and books here). This game deserves its score for sheer value alone.

The only true criticism I have of Nocturne comes up when considering the story line. Unfortunately, the tales told in the four chapters are fairly linear and straightforward. They do not allow the player to gather enough reps to hang himself. However, this is quite all right, because when you've had the whatever scared out of you, it's kind of hard to concentrate. Also, the developers avoided falling into the trap of highlighting items needed to complete missions. Looking for a key, or a clue? Then you had better look, because nothing jumps up and screams "here I am" in this game. If you don't spot it, tough. You just keep battling on until you do. Despite the fact that the stories are fairly simple and uncomplicated, the puzzles and mysteries provided by the game are by no means easy to solve.

The Stranger is fairly easy to control (despite the fact that the controls can be very sensitive) with the entire game being keyboard driven. As a matter of fact, the developers have attempted to create a shoot-em-up, how-fast-can-you-tap-the-keys action adventure. Atmosphere is the whole thing here, and to the end of keeping the

"It's our job to be in grave danger" - The Stranger

TOO COOL FOR THESE SHADES (AKA, HIM, SUE)

this game is the fact that, to pull all of this off, you need something of a monster machine to run it, as it demands a lot from a PC. However, I think, I have found, in Nocturne, a great reason to get an upgrade...

Nocturne is a wonderful game in almost every respect. It is a brilliantly put together product that exits the realm of a mere computer game, and lifts entertainment software to the status of an art form. I recommend this one with total [illegible] It is a game that every gamer should experience, just to see how good these things can get.

Horror Adventure

An absolute masterpiece of a game, Nocturne is a scary, chilling and thrilling journey into the world of early 19th century pulp horror. With several incomparable elements, this game will definitely thrill everyone who experiences it.... Not to mention scare the living daylights out of them!

Terminal Reality | Gathering of Developers | New / 3DO (011) 315-4000

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Pentium II 400 MHz, 128 MB Ram, 8 X CD Rom, 8 MB Video Accelerator, 1 GB HD, Windows 98/NT, DirectX 6.0

PC CD ROM

Shryke

Graphics	Sound	Play	Concept	Overall
95	89	91	90	93
95	91	92	98	

NEW AGE GAMING

Flight Simulator 2000

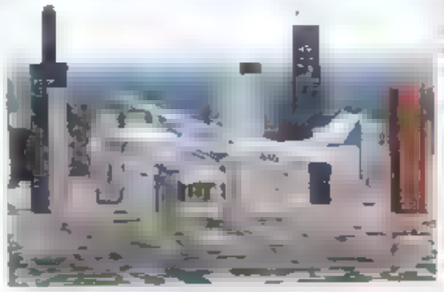
Flight simulations for the PC have been around for nearly two decades now, and the civil aviation title that is the most familiar to us through the years has been Microsoft Flight Simulator. It is now 17 years since its original incarnation, and it's remarkable to see how this title has evolved into the glorious state in which it resides at present. Many described Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000 as the flight simulation of the new millennium, and although it might not be 100% accurate, it sure provides the home user with an experience very close to the real thing in many ways...

Memnoch

Arguably Microsoft Flight Simulator is maybe the most widely sold and played flight simulation in the globe. [illegible] simulations such as Flight [illegible] Simulator. The thing is much more visible at higher altitudes, which can get a bit boring at times, but

Microsoft also [illegible] the sim in two packages, the standard version and the professional version. Although the professional version offers much more to the already jam packed [illegible] Sim IQ.com showed that 62% of the participants weren't convinced that producing a flight simulation should be done as two different packages while [illegible] 3D graphics engine that [illegible] impressive, although not an entirely new concept, but I must say that Microsoft seem to get it right as bringing [illegible] improvement [illegible] Flight Simulator. The [illegible] countries [illegible] Flight Simulator 2000 features 5 new airports [illegible] for London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago, additionally the professional version offers Boston, Washington DC, Seattle, Berlin, Tokyo and Rome. These cities are nicely detailed by skyscrapers, bridges, and all kinds of landmark buildings found in the real world. Microsoft chose to stick with the tried scenery system which is [illegible] but lacks the beauty of the [illegible] simulations such as Flight [illegible]. The thing is much more visible at higher altitudes, which can get a bit boring at times, but after all, we're flying the plane and not the [illegible] through National Geographic, right.

Speaking of the planes, [illegible] adding a lot of new [illegible] to the Flight Simulator [illegible] without hiccups, as well as [illegible] the 82KG version [illegible] Boeing 777-300, and the professional version offers the Raytheon/Beech King Air 350, the Mooney Bravo, and the L R cockpit version of the Bravo. This is quite a comprehensive set of aircraft and [illegible] range of flight [illegible] the basic relevant instrumentation found for each of the planes. The [illegible] but [illegible] Realistic [illegible] Flight Simulator which isn't all that bright. Microsoft tries to compensate for this by having separate windows for the radio, GPS, throttles, compass and fuel management, depending on the type of aircraft. [illegible] the cockpit becomes invisible and the view through the windshield becomes obscured after becoming used to the lack of movement in Flight that allows [illegible] the lack [illegible] The 3D models [illegible] very nicely detailed, and at closer look [illegible] It's see the sun [illegible] planes [illegible] [illegible] in the pitch axis, and although I'm not a [illegible] pilot, I'm quite sure that the real plane doesn't do that. I was so looking forward to taking the Bell JetRanger helicopter through [illegible] I could for the life of me not manage to get into a stable hover close to the ground, making landings impossible. Taking off is usually a process of trying to keep the chopper upright while trying to get as much forward acceleration to get [illegible]



ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM

BLASTER PC

Flight Simulator	Memnoch	Memnoch	Cost (800) 220-1111	Pentium III 450 MHz 30 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 3 MB Video Card 200 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium II 300 MHz 64 MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 4 MB AGP Video Card 345+ MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0)
For over 17 years now Flight Simulator provided the flight enthusiast with a high quality gaming experience. Flight Simulator 2000 and Pro offers us the richest simulation in the series yet, and although the competition has caught up, it's still a worthy addition to the simulation fan's collection.	Pro Plus '99 Flight Unlimited III Fly!	Large Variety of Aircraft Great Attract Scenery Great Planes	Commercial Pricing Design Flight Modelling Bell Cockpit Art	http://www.microsoft.com/games/fs/	$ 249.95 (Retail)

	Sound	Graphics	Gameplay	Value	Overall
	75	78	80	84	82
	82	NA	85	90	

PC CD ROM

Memnoch

NEW AGE GAMING

It seems that most game developers are currently cashing in on previous hits in some or other way. It is the year of sequels for most, but Impressions Games (under the Sierra Studios label) have opted to instead release something that is not a sequel, but makes use of the rather impressive Caesar III engine. Prepare to re-enter the classical world, this time in mystical ancient Egypt...

R.A.V.E.N.

PHARAOH

Allow me to set the scene: the year is 3 500 BC, and Egypt is still but a nascent nation, consisting predominantly of scattered bands and tribes, with a primitive social hierarchy emerging. Several relatively powerful "noble" families now seek to expand their influence, and the birth of Egyptian civilisation is at hand. And so it is that you find yourself heading one of these families on its road down history...

The engine employed in Pharaoh is virtually the Caesar III engine, but a few tweaks and upgrades have been applied to it. Those of you who have played Caesar III will be familiar with the basic concepts and premises, and yet the game still covers enough new ground that even Caesar III veterans will need to learn the game's subtleties before they can play with excellence. The object of the game is ultimately to become Pharaoh, ruler of the Egyptian Kingdom. This is accomplished by building progressively more powerful, influential and advanced settlements, starting with the rudest of villages and culminating in the Pharaoh's capital. Furthermore, history must be informed of all these accomplishments, and this can only be achieved by building imposing monuments to Egyptian might and glory, ranging from burial tombs to massive pyramids and sphinxes.

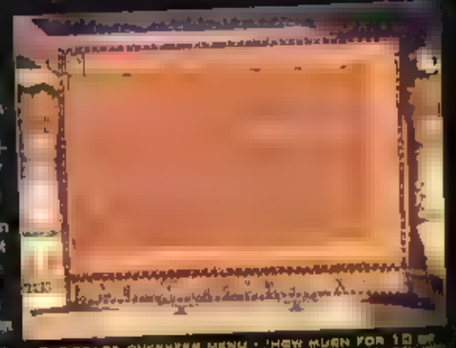
Being based on concepts introduced in Caesar III, Pharaoh once again has you juggling population, food production, jobs, finances, industries, health, education, entertainment, military forces and the favour of the gods. The safety of the population is of prime importance, and so you must protect them from fires, crime and disease, and you must look after their homes and their places of work. You must provide them with water and food, and their living areas must be pleasant to live in. Later on, their needs grow to include such luxuries as pottery, beer (yes, everyone's an alcoholic) and varied food types. They also require services such as education (which generally requires papyrus to function), health services (whose requirements include linen) and entertainment. Each of these requires an entire supporting industry, and they all require people in order to operate. It is thus imperative to grow your city at a controlled rate. How well you run your city influences the happiness of your citizens, and thus you must be able to not only provide them with all the required amenities, but also pay them well enough, tax them little enough and supply all of them with jobs. Should the citizens' mood turn sour, you will suffer inefficiency, crime, and emigration; when they are really upset they begin to riot and burn down buildings.

The gods take a daily interest in Egyptian life, and woe to the powerful who do not pay their dues! However, should you flatter the deities enough, they will reward you for your faithful observance (and fear). Primarily, five major Egyptian gods. Often this is also reflected in the nature of the city - an agricultural settlement will act differently and worship differently to a military encampment, for example.

The provision of food has become more complex and varied. Farming in desert-covered Egypt was a very different affair to farming in most of Europe at the time or later. The Nile River was the lifeblood of Egyptian culture, for the very simple reason that without it life in the Sahara would be harsh enough to preclude the birth of a civilisation. Not only did the Nile provide drinking and washing water, it also flooded its banks annually, depositing rich, fertile sediments upon it. This soil was used by the Egyptians to cultivate crops. However, the farmland was flooded over for three or four months every year, leading to a rather unique situation. In Pharaoh you learn to manage an annual crop, rather than the ongoing affairs prevalent in Caesar III, as non-floodplain farming is extremely rare and inefficient.

Hunting also contributes to the citizens' diet; this is an ongoing affair. Balancing these main food-gathering options with others, including imports of food types from other cities, is a delicate task that, if botched, will surely result in your city's downfall.

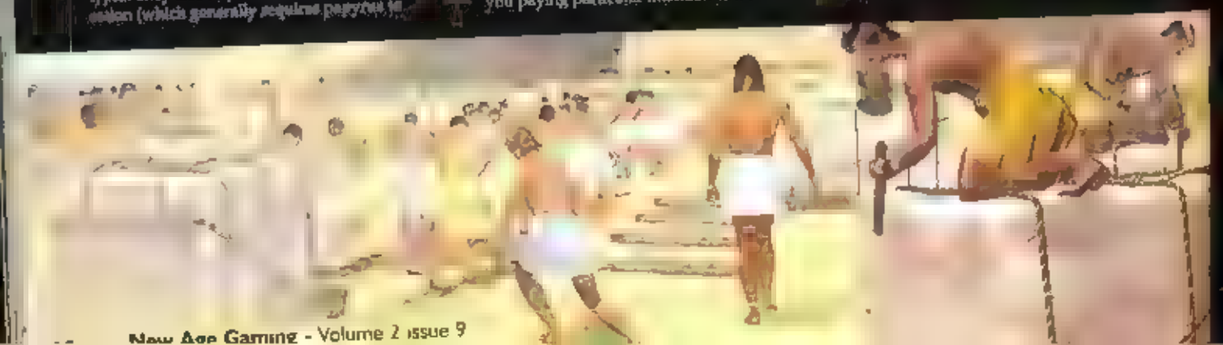
As the Pharaoh learns to trust your judgement and abilities, you will be entrusted with assignments of a military nature. This does not mean that you can now neglect your civilian population, and this is also reflected in the nature of the city - an agricultural settlement will act differently and worship differently to a military encampment, for example.



THE TRADE OVERSEER MENU - THEY MUST FOR 12 OF THEIR BEST STONE BLOCKS AND SIX SLAVES TO BARTER BY

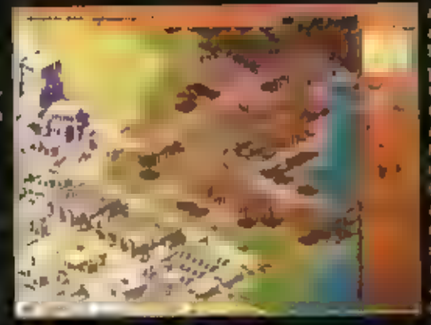
IF YOU WANT TO LIVE FOREVER YOU NEED A GOOD TOMB

In Pharaoh (though, of course, there were far more in actuality), and several others make "guest appearances" for specific purposes. Interestingly enough, it is now sometimes possible to appease deities "through each other", as it were, due to the nature of the Egyptian pantheon. Another addition to the religious theme is the concept of "patron gods" of various cities, and each assignment will have you paying particular attention to a different



tion and concerns. In fact, if anything, these become more demanding, as your city must now support not only itself, but also armed forces for its defence and that of the Kingdom in general. The Pharaoh will occasionally request levies of troops in addition to any monetary or goods tributes he may require.

All of this sounding a little complex? Well, it is, but at the same time, it isn't, thanks to the incredible engine being employed here. As mentioned above, Caesar III's engine was not too bad to begin with; Pharaoh's engine takes all the best from that engine and improves further on it. It is now so detailed that you can keep an eye on every aspect of your city. And easily, too. As before, right-clicking on anything displays a brief (bit) information box. However, almost every report now has buttons linking you to the most relevant other reports and advisors (now called "overseers"), and so it is very easy to quickly run through all the most important aspects of your city, or to execute an in-depth investigation of any specific factor. This ease is also reflected in the control interface itself, as all instructions are accessed just as easily. Tax rates and festivals alike can now be set directly from their relevant structures, never leaving the main city map view. This view can, of course, be rotated in 90-degrees intervals from any compass point. The sidebar can be retracted, though it seems many players play that way. The various categories of buildings, facilities and public works is organised slightly differently from Caesar III, but are attractively grouped under graphic icons resembling hieroglyphics. As before, most of these lead to submenus to specify the exact feature you require.



Sound and Vision

The main city map is presented as an isometric projection, with the sidebar (containing the control buttons and the minimap) on the right. The detail in the graphics is at least as great as in Pharaoh's predecessor, Caesar III. Each hut, temple, citizen, tree - in fact, anything you care to name - has been rendered in meticulous detail that stands up to scrutiny in any of the resolutions available (which are 640x480, 800x600 and 1024x768). All buildings, features and people are clear and distinguishable, even though at times there is a hell of a lot going on. In most The Kingdoms [illegible] a museum, which is to say it depicts a papyrus scroll. Even the Overseer report pages look appealing, while managing to impart a wealth of information.

You can pretty much always hear what is going on in your city - each building makes its own distinctive noises, and people chat to you and give you their honest (sometimes too much so!) opinions of your city if you ask them (by right-clicking on them, of course). During play you may, of course, choose to listen to the music included (which, incidentally, is implemented by means of MP3s). This soundtrack is no doubt the work of a very talented digital musician, and blends classical Egyptian styles with synth-trance and funk ideas. Not bad at all!

How does it play?

A very important question about any game is "how long will it entertain me for?" Now, given that each assignment in Pharaoh takes between an hour (for the first couple of missions) and upwards of twelve (for some of the later missions), and the number of assignments and their incredible variety, it is safe to assume that this title is good for a very long time indeed. Being "real-time" (the term "scaled-time" may be more appropriate, as weeks pass in the space of minutes) means that Pharaoh can get dangerously addictive, due to the "just a couple more adjustments" syndrome! Pharaoh's updated interface also means that it is very easy to pick up where you've left off previously when resuming a saved game.

In addition to being a beautifully crafted game, Pharaoh also boasts an impressive degree of authenticity, from a historical point of view. As was the case with Caesar III, after playing this one is left with a far more accurate and detailed picture of life in ancient Egypt, which might (some day) pay dividends in a Trivial Pursuit game!

ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM

BLASTER PC

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER
Empire Building	Impressions Games	Sierra Studios	Cyber (011) 238-1117

A very impressive upgrade of a successful game engine, with a wealth of authentic information and brilliant gameplay. The one sad fact is that this title will, most likely render its predecessor (Caesar III) utterly obsolete, which can be looked at in either a good light or a bad light.

http://www.sierrastudios.com

R 299.00

PLAYABILITY	LEARNING CURVE	CONTINUITY	ENDURANCE
87	88	94	93
84	86	91	92

PC CD ROM

R.A.V.E.N.

NEW AGE GAMING

89

It does the heart good to see a locally produced computer game hit the shelves. The determination, discipline and sheer amount of work required for such an endeavour is phenomenal. However, so often the attitude towards projects like this, held by most South Africans, is "hey, man, it's local. It can't be good." The true question is, just how good is Twilyt's The Tainted, and will it hold it's own against international competition?

Shryke

The Tainted

ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM

BLASTER PC

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	MINIMUM	RECOMMENDED
Action Adventure	Colonial	Twilyt Productions	Gamesworld (011) 886-1992	Pentium 166 (MMX) 16 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 2 MB Video Card Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium 166+ (MMX) 16 + MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 2 MB Video Card Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)

Fall Out 2 Important Dates | Sneaky AI System Requirements Friendly Interface | Suspect Sound Sometimes Jerky Support Controls

http://www.twilyt.com | R 299.00

PC CD ROM

Shryke

NEW AGE GAMING

SOUND	GRAPHICS	PLAYABILITY	ENJOYMENT	OVERALL
56	68	62	68	63

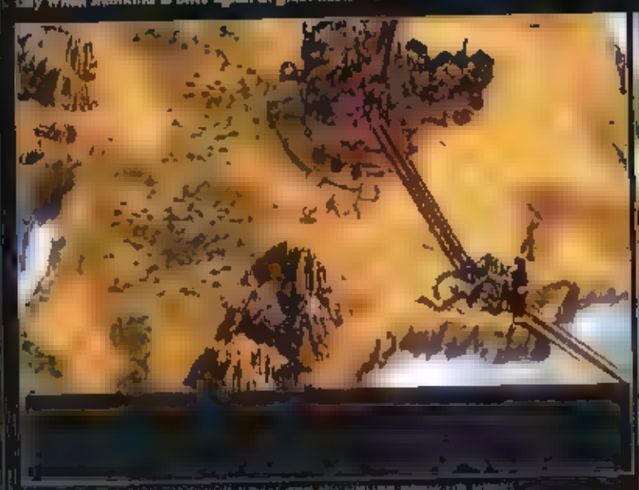
From Monolith and Valkyrie Studios comes an RPG set in a world that is not only peculiar in its functioning but is also filled with magic, mystery and technology. A strange combination indeed but those familiar with manga should feel right at home with a story that is the driving force behind the anime style graphics and colourful characters.

Soul Assassin

Many ages ago a daemon by the name of Gemma stole the sacred keys from the Creator and mocked him as he stood on the soil of the seven floating continents of Septerra Core and spilled the blood of the innocent. It is rumoured that these keys, if used at the right time on the core, could open the gates to heaven. The Creator sent his only begotten son, Marduk, to retrieve the keys and save the people from the tyranny of Gemma and his minions. After the battle of the Seven Winds Marduk emerged victorious and hid the keys throughout the world and it is said that one day when mankind is once again in great need the keys will be recovered by a descendant of Marduk and the core finally unlocked to reveal its secrets.

Now the keys have been found and one of Marduk's descendants, Doskias, who is planning to force an alignment of the continents against the wishes of the Chosen Elder, Emperor Asperine. They have decided to hide the keys from him, but unfortunately through his persistence he now threatens to start a war to regain the sacred objects.

And so the game begins as you take on the role of Maya, a young spirited teenage girl from level 3. She is from a small town called Oasis where the people make their living from collecting and utilising all the junk that the continent above them discard. It is not too long before one of the younger boys get into trouble for smuggling guns that he collected on the junk piles. As she sets out to help the



THEY THINK I DAMAGE MY HOVER FOR HIM!

Doskias: It is not today. The soldiers are meant to save [illegible] done. Now that we have [illegible] time, we shall see [illegible]

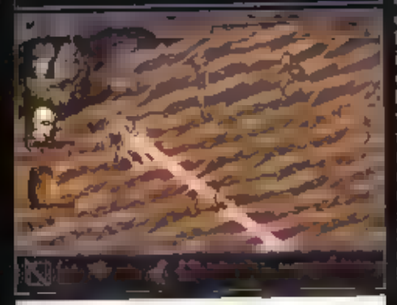
A SMALL SAMPLE OF THE GAME'S UNIQUENESS

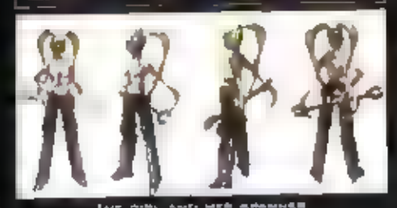
Tori events are in motion behind the scenes that will eventually lead her to the other layers and finally to a confrontation with Doskias. Unknown to Maya he was responsible for the death of her parents and so the plot thickens as she sets out on her quest. Along the way Maya will meet up with friends that will aid her in her adventure and up to 2 other characters can join her to form a party. As the game continues more people will be willing to join her party, although the maximum allowable of three forces you to drop a member if another is chosen. This is very similar to the party system used by Final Fantasy VII and keeps things fresh as you constantly get to meet new characters and explore their personalities. Characters range from mindless robotic dogs right up to technical wizards capable of repairing broken robots during battle.

Something that Septerra Core makes great use of is voice dialogue, and this can be seen by the way that the story is mostly driven through the interaction with other characters. You can talk to almost every person you meet all having some or other interesting comment to bring forth about current situations. The amount of voice acting almost borders on the ridiculous, but adds greatly to the believability of the world and enjoyment of the game.

Unfortunately the game is very linear and you need to talk to everybody to find clues and uncover information before you will be allowed to proceed and continue with the story. One irritating aspect of all the interaction with other characters is the fact that Septerra Core doesn't keep track of what you have spoken to NPCs about before, and often you find yourself talking about a subject that you have already covered in a previous conversation.

Battle sequences utilises a semi real-time technique where characters have an action meter below their portraits containing information such as HP, very similar to the one used in the Final Fantasy series. Once the bar is full your character is able to perform and attack. There is a difference however, each character bar is split into three sections and the more sections that are full, the more complicated the move that your characters can perform. In most instances it is best to wait until the bar is full before you attack, although to perform a simple action such as drinking a health potion only requires one section to be full. I found this method a little better than the Final Fantasy method although it can take some time for 3 section to be filled. One peculiarity of the game is the way that characters move towards each other for an attack during battles. Instead of walking/running to the enemies or vice versa they leap across the screen make an attack and jump back. This looks a little awkward and comical and takes away from the believability of the battle.



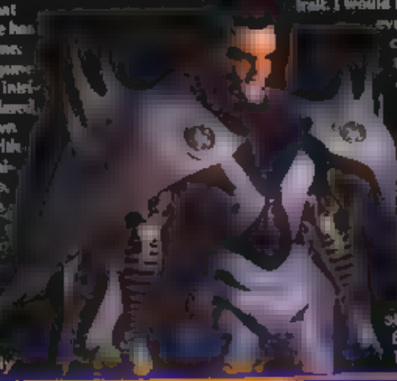


THE GIRL AND HER STRIKER

The game also utilises a magic system based on cards. During battles each character has a single card slot that can be used. These slots can either be used separately to cast a spell to perform its intended function, i.e. heal card can be used to cast heal, or any combination of three cards can be used to cast an entirely different spell. Players will have to experiment to find different combinations since they aren't listed. Finding new spell effects is almost a game within itself and I really enjoyed finding new spells.

Graphically Septerra Core also reminds me of more of Fallout. It has a similar look and feel, beside the towns and other the only difference being that Septerra Core has a manga theme. Most of the game utilised very intricate pre-rendered and pre-drawn backdrops with characters animated on top. The locations themselves look fantastic and range from exotic cities to old temple ruins. Unfortunately there are a couple of locations that are not as detailed as the rest that gives the impression that Valkyrie might have rushed to finish the game. Some of the graphics are also not properly anti-aliased and due to this there are a lot of jagged little edges that can be seen in the environments. This doesn't detract from the game too much, probably only noticeable if you really look for it. Another graphical feature that I found irritating was that a lot of the NPC's you converse with have the same portrait. I would have liked to see different faces every time I speak to someone, you can never pay too much attention to small details like these. One aspect that has been exceptionally well done by them is the special effects of the magical spells. They are very intuitive and make use of almost every graphical technique to present stunning eye candy.

THE SKY IS FALLING! THE SKY IS FALLING!



Overall Septerra Core offers an enjoyable gaming experience even though it lacks total freedom to move wherever you want and is bound by a linear story. Veterans of RPG games might find the gameplay a little too easy but the story is the main attraction which all should enjoy and the manga appearance offers a unique graphical look.

ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM

BLASTER PC

Role Playing Action

Septerra Core is an RPG game in the same vein as Final Fantasy VII with a manga theme to it. The story is interesting and the concept of the world where the game takes place is unique. You play as a young teenage girl, Maya, who by way of circumstances ends up having to face an evil that threatens the world.

Monolith

Final Fantasy VII, Fallout

Interesting Story, Good Sound, Character Development

Standard Characters, Jumping in Battles

http://www.lith.com

R 299.00

Pentium III 266 MHz, 32 MB Ram, 4 X CD Rom, 8 MB Video Card, 130 MB HD, Windows 98/ME (DirectX 6.1)

Pentium II 266 MHz, 64 MB Ram, 8 X CD Rom, 8 MB AGP Video Card, 240+ MB HD, Windows 98/98 (DirectX 7.0)

PC CD ROM

Soul Assassin

NEW AGE GAMING

75	86	75	81	80
82	78	82	81	

If life in the rat race is getting you down why not move to the jungle, build a tree-house and live with the apes. This way you can escape pollution, noise, and backed-up highways. The only problem with the jungle is that you've got leopards, big spiders and howling baboons, so in the end you just can't win.

RedTide

Disney's TARZAN

ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM

BLASTER PC

PC CD ROM

Platform

Disney's Tarzan is a very good attempt at a movie tie-in, graphically it shines, and from a central one playability point of view it cannot be faulted. The only problem is that although you've got plenty of different levels and various styles of play the whole effort is wasted because it gets dull quickly.

Eurocom Developments | Disney Interactive | Crew (011) 223-1311

Graphics Sound Control | Repetitive Unoriginal Console Port

http://www.disney.co.uk | R 299.00

Pentium 166 MHz, 24 MB Ram, 4 X CD Rom, 2 MB Video Card, 30 MB HD, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1) ...

Pentium 200 MHz MMX, 32 MB Ram, 4+ X CD Rom, 4 MB Video Accelerator, 90+ MB HD, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0) ...

RedTide

NEW AGE GAMING

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	LONGEVITY	
83	67	80	69	
81	51	78	65	72

Final Fantasy VIII has to be one of the most anticipated titles this year for the PlayStation and rightly so. The developer, SquareSoft, is renowned for the FF series and with the latest addition they have outdone themselves and presented gamers with a title that is intriguing, beautifully presented and most of all fun to play. The aspects that stand out the most in the Final Fantasy series are the unique, intriguing and complex storylines presented and in FF8 SquareSoft has created a masterpiece that will be the envy of all game developers.

Soul Assassin

FINAL FANTASY® VIII

Y[illegible] play Squall Leonhart, a 17 year-old anti-social teenager enrolled in the most prestigious military academy in the world. The Academy is simply known [illegible] mercenaries known as SeeD for hire to the highest bidder and Squall is on the verge of graduating as a full fledged SeeD member. He is [illegible] known as Balamb Garden where he meets up with the other central characters such as Seifer Almasy – Squall's class rival, instructor Quistis Trepe, the [illegible] quirky yet lovable Selphie Tilmitt. Later on you also [illegible] known as Rinoa who joins the group as a [illegible] sorceress. After successfully completing the final SeeD exam which is a nicely disguised to great Squall and his party are dispatched to help out a small resistance group led by the beautiful Rinoa. Apparently they plan to liberate their country from the oppressive rule of the military government, by kidnapping the president with the help of SeeD. As [illegible]

[illegible] like [illegible] long forgotten [illegible] with Selphie at her side and is hell bent on world domination. The event now becomes the [illegible] and every time you think you have the plot figured out something new develops and throws you totally off guard. I won't spoil the story and go into detail of what happens in FF8, [illegible] anyone wanting to know the details we have to play the game. Suffice to say that it is the most enjoyable and intriguing plot I [illegible] game.

The whole game revolves around six characters and their relationships and changing allegiance towards each other as they try and save the world. As always romance features big [illegible]

In any FF storyline and FF8 is no exception. Unlike FF7 where one of the main romantic characters, Aeris, dies (I [illegible] Square for that plot twist) in FF8 the romantic involvements continue to the conclusion, so you can expect a surprising ending where all the characters could still be alive [illegible] but to be able to do exactly [illegible] FMV sequence [illegible] in their world. A note of warning for those embarking on FF8: once you start playing the game, kiss all your free time goodbye and give notice to friends and relatives that you will be [illegible] until you have finished FF8. It is that addictive! [illegible] that time Squall and his mercenary group will become your new best friends. (Something tells me I have been [illegible]). Another reason [illegible] FF8 such a tremendous game to play is the scope of the world that it takes place in. Simply put the world is Huge! The world has numerous towns and countless locations to visit each with interesting [illegible] history portrayed with detailed backdrops. During your [illegible] numerous quests and sub-quests to pursue and come up against monsters that are unique and challenging. The world is so big that most gamers will miss a lot of quests and items the first time round and will probably end up playing it a second time to find all the hidden quests and items. This adds to the continuity of FF8 since the game takes almost 90 hours to complete as you play the 4 discs that make up FF8.

One aspect that hasn't changed too much is the battle system used in FF8 and anyone that played FF7 will feel right at home. It still uses the same close up isometrical view with enemies on one side and your party of three characters on the [illegible] as attacking a monster or casting a spell. Should all three of your characters get killed [illegible]

An example would be a character drawing the [illegible] from a monster. They would receive [illegible] spells every time they draw it and can then cast Cure four times [illegible] would have to draw it [illegible] a monster [illegible] however [illegible] slightly tedious to keep drawing spells and it takes up a lot of time to get your characters to the [illegible] level. So they can store an adequate [illegible] you need to replenish used spells [illegible] so often and it becomes a non-ending cycle throughout the game. A most everywhere in FF8 you will encounter different enemies each with their own unique set of spells that can be drawn. This keeps hunting for monsters interesting and usually [illegible]

with any new monster you encounter you will be able to draw new spells to add to your arsenal.

[illegible] introduced in FF8 is the Junction system, which replaces the Materia system of FF7. It is a complex system with which you can modify your characters attributes such as strength, vitality, speed [illegible] make your [illegible] in conjunction with Guardian Forces and drawn magic. Guardian Forces (GF) [illegible] best described as unseen members of your party and [illegible] summoned during battle. They can take [illegible] age and gain experience [illegible] and his group can and advance in level as well. GF's are gained by fighting them directly and winning the battle in which case they will [illegible] tank join you or they can be [illegible]

[illegible] junctioned to it. For instance later in the game you get a spell [illegible] which is a second level Thunder spell. It is more powerful than Thunder and will increase your [illegible] than Thunder [illegible]. The trick is [illegible] not all GF's [illegible] plus the [illegible] and taking a [illegible] that any monster [illegible]

[illegible] character and provide them with a [illegible] [illegible] this can provide. In [illegible] be found during [illegible] attribute. Lets say you [illegible] and events. Thunder spells [illegible] function any of the two spells [illegible]. Obviously twenty Thunder spells will increase your strength more than four Cure spells. The amount any modifier increases is dependent [illegible] level of the spell. So spells [illegible]

Triad Card Game

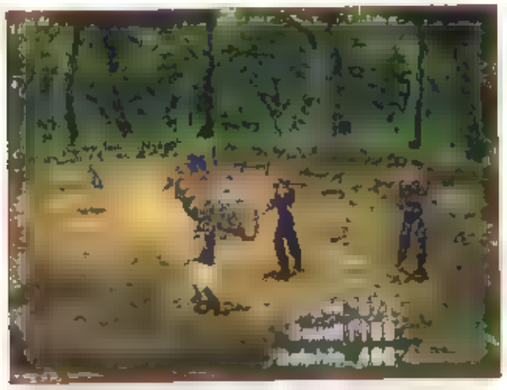
Included within FF8 is a game within a game in the form of a card game named Triad. It isn't necessary to play it to complete FF8 but does prove to be highly addictive and I wouldn't be surprised if the game actually gets published in the real world. Throughout the FF8 world you will encounter NPC's that can be challenged and usually

supply potions and the like. [illegible] and upgrades that [illegible] be [illegible] Triad [illegible] played on a board [illegible] along with 5 cards. All the cards have [illegible] each [illegible] numbers ranging from [illegible]

[illegible] side – top, bottom, left and right. The cards represent some [illegible] monsters and GF's that are encountered in the FF8 world. The stronger the monster pictured on the card the higher the values on [illegible] side. Cards can be gained by winning them from NPC [illegible] battles you could gain a card of the monster you [illegible]

The winner in a game is decided by the amount of cards controlled. The number of cards controlled on the board is represented by the blue and red shades of the cards. To gain control of a card you need to place a card with a higher value on the side of the card than you are trying to control. Lets say there is a card in the top left corner of the board with a strength value of 4 on its right hand side. You need to place a card to the right of it that has a strength higher than 4 on its left hand side. This will flip over the top left card and you will gain [illegible] card. The player that [illegible] once all cards have been filled wins. Sounds very easy but trust me when I say that [illegible] complete [illegible] are difficult to beat at [illegible]

The minimum that can be lost during a card game is one card or the [illegible] every single card you own. This is dependant on the [illegible] you are playing in and varies from town to town. [illegible] different rules are beyond the scope of this article and [illegible] depth within the game.




GENRE
DEVELOPER
PUBLISHER
SUPPLIER
CONTROLLER
OPTIONAL
Role Playing Game
Squaresoft
Sony Computer Entertainment Europe
Star Receptor Interactive (011) 445-7988
Final Fantasy Series Energizer
Massive Game Sensational Graphics Character Development
http://www.playstation-europe.com
R 349.00
Analogue controller
Analog controller Compatible
Pocket
Memory card Required
PlayStation
Soul Assassin
94
92
89
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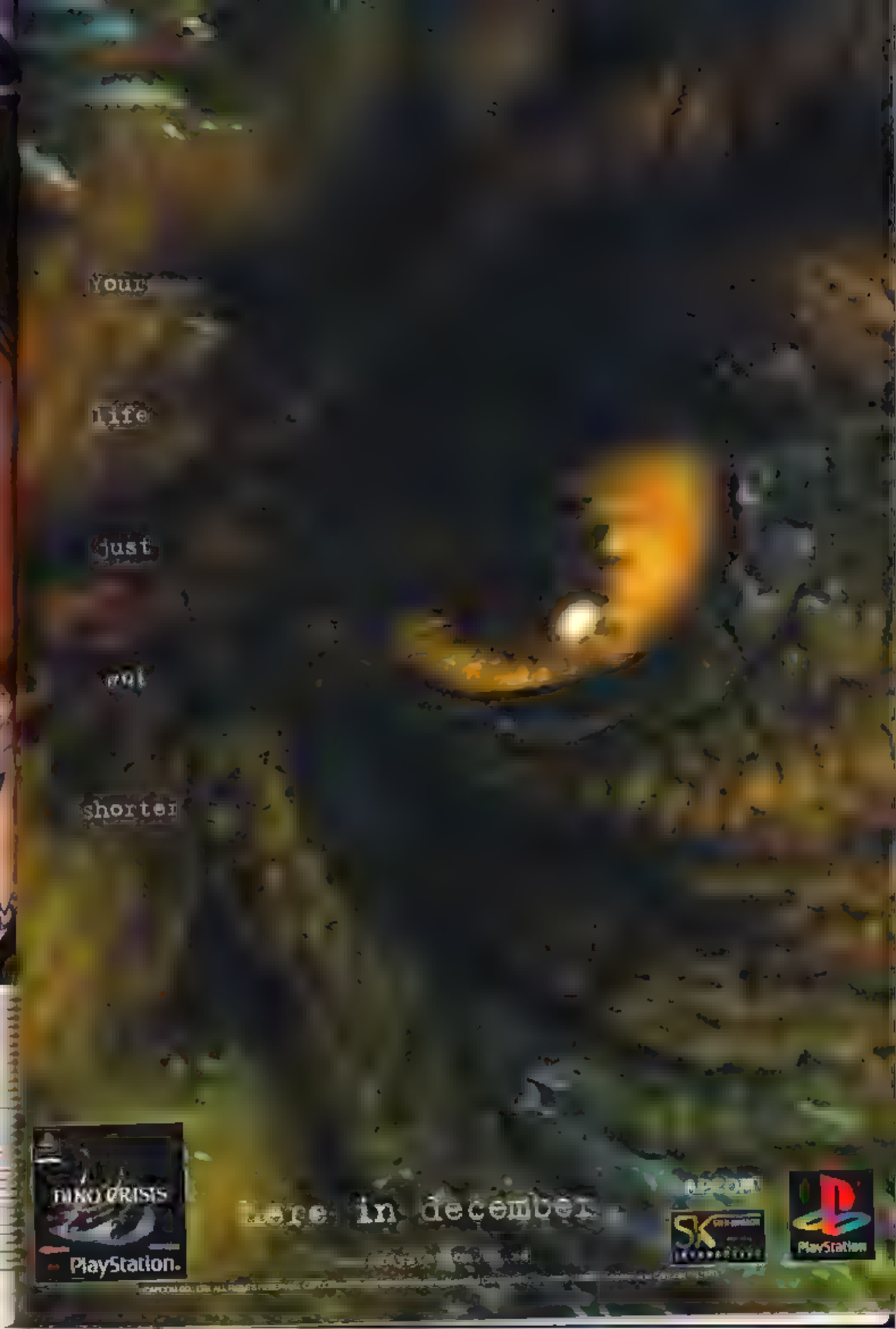
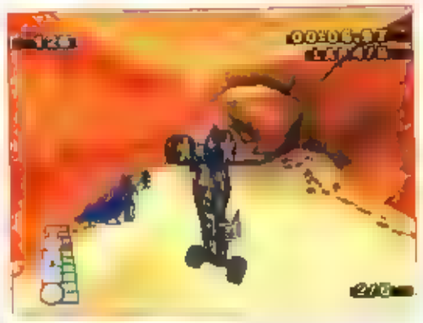
93
95
92


Your
life
just
not
shorter
DINO CRISIS
PlayStation.
here in december
CAPCOM
SK
PlayStation



I remember, way back when I was knee high to a grasshopper and dinosaurs still roamed the earth, that I had an absolutely enormous collection of dinky toys. These scaled down toy cars were the be all and end all of a kids life back in the days before PC's, and entire reputations were staked on how many of these diminutive vehicles a kid owned. Among the best of all of these was the Hotwheels range. These were beautifully cast, gorgeously painted and solid as rocks. Hotwheels were a five-year-olds status symbols. Hotwheels ruled. Now, Electronic Arts brings them to the PlayStation in a thrilling, tyre burning, car flipping, metal grinding, engine roaring racing game where being the fastest isn't enough. - Skryke

Hot Wheels TURBO RACING

Genre	Developer	Publisher	Supplier	Controller	Original
Racing	Electronic Arts	Electronic Arts	Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1313	2 Rapid / Memory card	PlayStation

Here's one that will thrill old and young alike. With easy gameplay, the emphasis of this game has on fun and excitement for the whole family, with youngsters enjoying the fast paced, brightly coloured action, and the older set able to enjoy the nostalgia of racing with their favourite toy car from yesteryear.

Size Storm (Need for Speed: Wipeout) | Easy Control, Large Variety, Highly Enjoyable | Pulses Too Busy, Graphics Problems

http://www.ea.com/hotwheels | R 399.00 | Skryke

Sound	Originality	Playability	Longevity	New Age Gaming
82	NA	86	83	84
85	85	86	83	

THE X FILES

While the PC game arrived on our shores some time ago, the PlayStation version of the X-Files adventure game has been long awaited by console players and series fans alike. It has, finally, seen the light of day on our shores, making many people, including me, very excited.

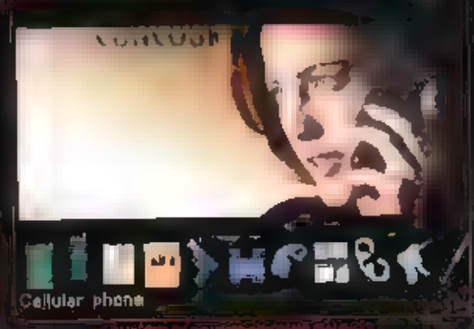
This title has been designed with the X-Files fan in mind. It's not some cheesy spin off that hopes to capitalise on its inspiration. Rather, it's more of an X-Files episode, presented in a slightly different format. In this way, the game is very similar to the X-Files movie. If you don't know the X-Files, you will certainly be lost, at least a little at first. No explanations or apologies are made in that regard, almost as though the developers are saying "If you don't know the X-Files, tough. You should know them. Doesn't everyone?" While this is a great thing for fans, who don't have to sit through boring explanations and step by step instructions on how to run an X-Files type investigation, what are the implications for someone who has never seen the X-Files before? Quite simply, not too much, in terms of working their way through the puzzles and challenges of the game. However, a lot of the plot's subtleties will be lost on those who don't know the series. What was the significance of cigarette butts lying around near the crime scene during the intro movie? What does it mean when strange, oily black patterns dance across some guy's eyes? And just who is that black dude, and should I be wary of him? These are questions that, to the X-Files fan, need never be asked, while the non-fan may finish the entire game without ever having found their answers. Not that these type of things need to be answered; it just makes the world of difference to the gamer when you arrive at the spine chilling conclusion that the Smoking Man may be right around the corner, or the guy whose eyes you just gazed into while he tried to separate your head from the rest of your body is possessed by an alien intelligence. It adds that true X-Files feel. It brings the game to life.

However, as I said before, you don't have to be a fan to enjoy the game. In fact, after the PC version was completed by a few of my friends, those sad few who weren't X-Files fans were 100% converted File junkies.

The player enters the world of the X-Files as Agent Craig Wilmore, an FBI Special Agent based in Seattle. Personally, I was initially really miffed at the fact that I couldn't take the part of the flaky Fox Mulder or the luscious Dana Scully, but this feeling soon passed as I began identifying with the very well characterised, very "real" Wilmore. Freshly divorced, Wilmore is the typical "renewed" bachelor, having just moved into his new apartment. He has friends. He has urges (which result in a rather heavily implied love affair with a female police detective). He has a bicycle, which he keeps in his living room. He has moods, and a sense of humour. It is almost as though you are peeking into the life of a real, living human being. This is one of the best elements of the game. This is not a game filmed by developers (who, it sometimes seems, know nothing about acting, direction, lighting, and camera work). This, rather, is a smartly produced, video based adventure, well acted and brilliantly directed by the self same team responsible for the X-Files series. In fact, within the game Fox Mulder is played by David Duchovny, just like in the series, and Scully is played by Gillian Anderson, also just like the series. In fact, every familiar face from the TV series that shows up in the game is played by the same actor that plays the part in the TV series, adding more of a "real" feel to the game. Even the intro to the game runs exactly like a typical X-files title sequence.

One complaint that cropped up about the PC version of this game, and will most certainly surface concerning the PlayStation version (which, by the way, is identical to the PC version) is the fact that players do not get to see much of Dana Scully or Fox Mulder - and no, 'Mentioned Mulder' does not come into the game at all! However, this is a story centred around Wilmore, and his attempts to find them. It is not really about Scully and Mulder as such, other than the fact that they have gone missing, and their supervisor, Agent Walter Skinner, enlists Wilmore's assistance in finding them. The plot

> "Agent Mulder? I'm Dana Scully. I've been assigned to work with you..." So started one of the greatest partnerships in modern entertainment history, that of FBI agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully, the intrepid pair who push the limits while investigating the cases nobody else wants: The X-Files. These two investigators have fuelled the imagination of fans around the world with their strange brand of alien controlled conspiracy theory, and millions of watchers tune into their exploits around the globe. It only makes sense, then, that the software entertainment industry should get in on the act. - Shryke



conspiracy that so typifies the X-Files. It is an engrossing and entertaining tale that will keep both File Junkies and "normal" people thoroughly entertained.

Like the series, this game is not high in body counts. In fact, the action is rather low key in this title. Rather than shooting everything that moves, the player is required to rely on mind power. Things will get you thinking, without a doubt. What few action sequences are to be found in the game are beautifully handled, with all the resources at the production disposal fully utilised. Stunning explosions and brilliantly choreographed fight scenes are the order of the day (when they crop up). The best part about the violence in this game is that it is there for a reason: it is used as a plot device, rather than as a title seller. This is a subtle title, and it is beautifully handled.

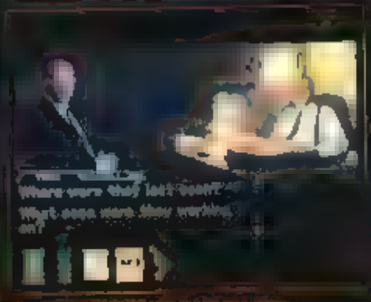
This game is really pretty to look at. Everything is based on real life, filmed video, rather than making use of computer generated characters and backgrounds. The producers spared no expense on set and special effects, making for a visually thrilling and beautiful product. The downside of this is that the game is huge - taking up four disks, as stated before. The upside: no clipping problems, no misshapen figures, no weird little visual anomalies. The good definitely outweighs the bad in this case.

The soundtrack is crisp and clear, featuring a very definite X-Files feel - complete with all the music and effects that you would expect. Having clear sound is vital in a game of this nature, seeing as how much of the game, and most of the clues, are based on what the various people within the game say. Controlling Agent Wilmore wouldn't be simpler. In fact, the whole game relies more on thought than dexterity - there are very few scenes where you need quick reflexes. This is one where you can sit back and relax, letting your mind do the work. Controlling while your hands perform only the barest necessities. However, there are occasions when you'll need to be quick, so be warned. The game's interface is very user friendly, including inventory items and making use of them is a matter of two or three buttons that need to be pushed. Moving is a matter of positioning the cursor and hitting one

button.

One downfall that this title holds is the fact that it will most probably appeal only to X-Files fans. And, while this is a huge number of people, not everyone will see this as a must have title. Another problem lies in the fact that this is aimed at mature audiences, not because of sex and violence, but because the game requires the kind of mature thought processes that most younger players are not capable of. This is one that Dad should buy for himself.

On the whole, this is a really cool game. It's like watching a [illegible] ing some control over what happens within it. Even the way Agent Wilmore responds is up to you. So, enter the world of conspiracies, allows, corrupt government officials and mysterious men who would stab you with weird polaroid things just as soon as look at you.



Adventure

A title most certainly aimed at fans, the X-Files is a wonderful 'episode' of the world famous and ever popular TV series. Excellent graphics, story control and a gripping tale of intrigue, betrayal and conspiracy, the X-Files is a long, challenging game that will most certainly thrill gamers - especially those that enjoy the X-Files.

Hyperbole Studios | Fox Interactive | Sony Playstation Manchester (011) 445-7900

Realistic Sound Effects | Excellent Graphics, Excellent Sound, Great Story | Aimed at Fans, Not High Action

http://www.foxinteractive.com | $ 399.00

PlayStation | Shryke

92	84	84	73	82
86	73	81	80	

NEW AGE GAMING

KURUSHI FINAL

What is this fascination that humans have when it comes to slotting blocks, cubes and other puzzle pieces together? Is it a simple case of much needed mental exercise or are we all trying to show that grey lump of plastic, with PlayStation written on it, who has the smartest CPU in the room?

RedTide

Critics for amateurs

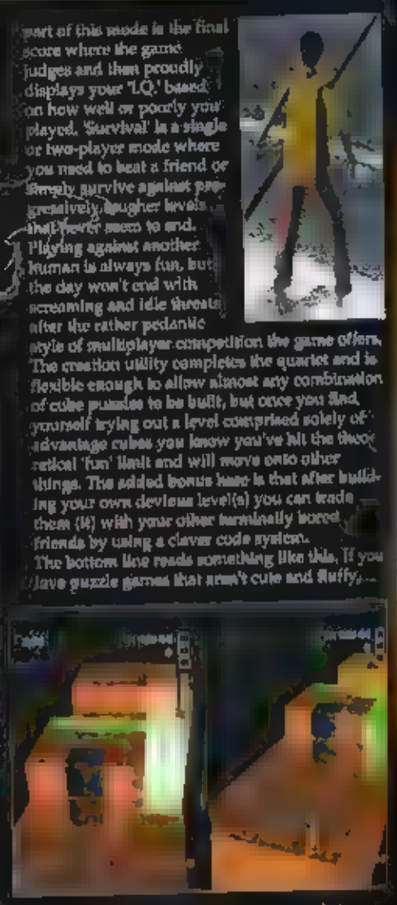
For those of you who missed the first game the concept behind Kurushi Final is simple. The puzzling action unfolds on a giant rectangle block floating in an unimaginative black void. You control a small character that represents your interface in the game world. When the game starts a few rows of cubes will begin slowly rolling towards you (like giant dice, without the dots) and the basic idea is to try and capture all these cubes before they fall off the edge. Using your virtual persona to move around, you must mark squares on the stage and then deactivate them when a cube is positioned on your marked square. Deactivating the square results in the cube being vaporised, or as the game puts it, captured. This process is repeated until no cubes remain. If the rolling cubes get past the player and fall off the edge of the giant rectangle the last row of the playing field disappears depending on how many went over the edge. This leaves you with less space to manoeuvre and forces you to figure out the correct sequence faster. In addition to the standard cubes there are two others, forbidden cubes (black) and advantage cubes (green). Forbidden cubes, if accidentally captured, cause the last row of the playing field to disappear immediately. The idea with the black cubes is to let them fall off the edge and fall harmlessly into the graphically challenged black background. The advantage cubes serve a different purpose and when captured place a green marker within a one-block radius all around the captured site, so if an advantage cube is captured in the middle zone where a total of nine blocks will be marked, freezing another battle deactivate these special marked blocks and all the cubes on those marked will be captured. It's a good idea to watch what you do far more often than not you'll end up capturing four black cubes and end up with less time and space than when you started. So the idea is to figure out how to capture all the non-black blocks before they roll over you by using the green blocks to your advantage. If you're not quick enough your character can be avalanched by the blocks or even fall off the edge with a dramatic cry for help. New to this version of the game are extra characters that must be unlocked by successfully completing various stages of the game. These locked characters and textures represent the bulk of the reason for prolonged play. Unfortunately they aren't enough to justify a midnight till dawn quest to see it all. That's the game in a nutshell, fun? Yes, for a while, but soon grows boring.

ONE OF THE NEW TEXTURES ON OFFER. (WHY BOTHER?)

No brains

The different game modes up for the playing start with '100 Attack', this is true puzzle based play where you must figure out the puzzle within a certain number of moves. This move limit is something that permeates all levels of the game and although is not essential to successfully completing all the levels, does reward you with bonus points. The hundred single puzzle levels are quite devious and the later levels require plenty of cranial muscle to complete. The second mode is indicative of what the game is all about as you progress through a series of increasingly difficult levels. The most distressing part of this mode is the final score where the game judges and then proudly displays your 'I.Q.' based on how well or poorly you played. 'Survival' is a single or two-player mode where you need to beat a friend or simply survive against progressively tougher levels that don't seem to end. Playing against another human is always fun, but the day won't end with screaming and idle threats after the rather pedantic style of multiplayer competition the game offers. The creation utility completes the quartet and is flexible enough to allow almost any combination of cube puzzles to be built, but once you find yourself trying out a level comprised solely of advantage cubes you know you've hit the theoretical 'fun' limit and will move onto other things. The added bonus here is that after building your own devious level(s) you can trade them (if) with your other terminally bored friends by using a clever code system.

The bottom line reads something like this. If you have puzzle games that aren't cute and fluffy... but provide a more dramatic game and you haven't played the first version, then Kurushi Final might find a happy home in your collection. If you only have a mild interest in puzzle games and you've had a go at the first game then leave this one alone. As far as an update it's great, but the primitive graphics and repetitive puzzle action have unfortunately held it under the water until it stopped moving. It's a mental block that has no style and isn't fun to play, play at your own peril...



Kingsley's Adventure is a platform game, interestingly enough it tells the story of Kingsley and his 'adventure'. Are you intrigued yet?

Genre	Developer	Publisher	Supplier	Controller Type	Optional Extras
Platform / RPG	Polygram	Sony Computer Entertainment Europe	Sony Computer Entertainment Europe (011) 445-2900	Standard Joypad Compatible / Analog Joystick Compatible	Powerful / Memory card Blocks

Spyro the Dragon, Crash Bandicoot 3, Ape Escape

Good Graphics (Good for Kids... Fun)

Better Content Only for Kids

http://www.kingsleyvideo.com

R 429.99

PlayStation

Madmon

Gameplay	Graphics	Sound	Longevity	Overall
86	67	55	72	73
75	83	68	75	

Colourful, good graphics and above-average sound are let down by a rather control method. Ultimately, though, Kingsley's Adventure may not be the world's most exciting game, but it may well be a good gift for a laid over the silly season. Look out for Spyro 2 (though).

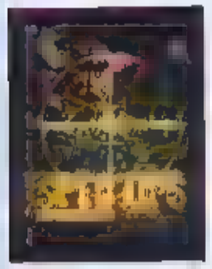
NEW AGE GAMING

Bargain Buys

Those nice folks at Sold Out - you know, the guys that like to keep gamers gaming by producing classic software titles at affordable prices - have launched a whole new range of products: Sold Out Extreme. This range features some of the biggest and best titles of yesterday (and even the day before) and are guaranteed to provide the cash strapped gamer with hours and hours of great entertainment. In addition, the Q range keeps growing larger and larger, and they too have a few new titles for us to take a look at. Lastly, the friendly blokes at Blizzard provide a little nostalgic Christmas cheer.

Sold Out Extreme - The Sold Out Extreme range is distributed by Gametronic, and all retail for R149.00. Any queries can be directed to (011) 886-1972.

Special Ops



Lead a crack team of US Rangers through a number of challenging missions in this versatile strategy title. Destroy enemy aircraft before they can take off. Assassinate an overly ambitious drug lord. Free a hostage moments before he is executed. These are the hazards that face the US Rangers, a little men armed group of crack troops who enter the fray as special operatives, highly trained and skilled in the use of a number of weapons, high tech gadgetry and high explosives. Crack troops to the last man, the Rangers are the US Government's answer to many a sticky situation.

As a player of Special Ops, you find yourself immersed in the world of the Rangers. Take the stealthy route, or wage all out war - the choice is yours.

Special Ops is one of the first 3D accelerated games, and is a pioneer of the 3rd person strategy genre. Featuring good graphics and a simple keyboard based control interface, Special Ops is simple to play, but very difficult to get the best of. It takes brains to get through these missions - one wrong step, and you may be sending your troops home in pine boxes.

The wide variety of operations that are available for completion in Special Ops are a wonderful aspect to this game. From hostage rescues to search and destroy, as a US Ranger, you get to do it all.

Sold Out Extreme Three Pack (Worms, Screamer, Atomic Bomber Man)

Getting more than one game for the price of one is always a bonus, and this particular Sold Out title features three good ones.

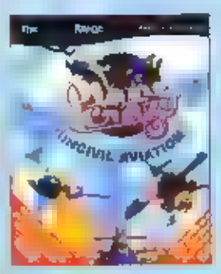
Atomic Bomber Man is a fun platform game which allows up to ten players on a LAN, or two at the same PC, to challenge each other in a remake of this classic console favourite. Who can be the fastest, slyest and, above all, most explosive Bomber Man? Have you got what it takes to negotiate a maze and decimate your friends and cause major destruction, without blowing yourself to Kingdom come? This is the perfect way to find out - and it's megatons of fun to boot.

Screamer takes you to the track in a racing game that allows you to take control of the fastest, flashiest cars in history. Six tracks are provided to challenge your vehicular skills as you burn rubber around them. Up to eight of the ten cars that take part in each race may be controlled by other players via LAN, as if the computer controlled drivers aren't tough enough to beat. Get ready for some absolutely intense racing action.

Worms is a great favourite, and it returns in another Sold Out multigame pack. Take control of an army of four intrepid worms, and blast the living daylights out of your friends, family, pets and landscape in this platform based bit of chaos. Rocket Launchers, Uzis, Grenades and Airstrikes are just a few of the forms of nastiness that you can rain down on human or computer controlled opponents.

Q Range - The Q Range range is distributed by TCM Warehouse, and all titles retail for R49.00. For details, please call (011) 312-1067.

Plane Crazy



Now here is a game that brings back lots of fond memories of sitting clustered around the LAN table with good friends, swearing at them, trying to out do them at every turn, and generally having good, clean (if slightly unruly) fun. Plane Crazy, the zany aeroplane racing game, is back with a vengeance to challenge single players and LAN players alike. Take to the skies in your customised crazy plane, and take on some of the most challenging aerial race courses ever devised.

Plane Crazy brings new definition to both flight sims and racing games. While it certainly is not a nuts and bolts flight simulator in the traditional sense, it is the closest thing to flying by the seat of your pants that you will get on your PC. Only the most skilful pilots win races as they steer their planes over and under obstacles, zipping in and out of nooks and crannies and performing insanely risky stunts to get power ups and weapons.

This is a game where the word fair play flies out the window as you try every dirty trick in the book to do your opponents in: slow them down with weapons, or try and drop bits of landscape on them as you racket through the canyons and cityscapes that make up these courses at high speeds. Fly mere metres above the ground just to get the quickest line. Winning isn't everything in this high speed game... it's the only thing!

Klik and Play

This title is one of the most unique game oriented software products ever to hit the market. Getting tired of playing games that other people have come up with? Think you could do a better job on your own? Well, then Klik and Play is exactly what you need. This programme allows you to design your own Windows based games, play them and even distribute them to your friends. So, let your creative juices flow, and leap right in.

With Klik and Play, you can devise any of a vast number of game genres: space shooters, racing games, card games, puzzles and many more are all possible with this easy and fun to use code writer. And, with Klik and Play's step by step instructions and user friendly interface, everyone can get in on the act.

So, if you think you have what it takes to put together killer games, then Klik and Play is for you. The beauty of this software lies in the fact that everything is provided for the would be designer, from backdrops to actors and special effects - everything is a click and drag away.

Your friends and family will be amazed at your new found skills as they enter the challenges of the games that you put together - hey, you might even get Dad to buy his "aspirant young programmer" that upgraded machine you've been nagging about. And they will never know that you had all the help you needed right there in one convenient tool kit: Klik and Play!

Warcraft II Battle.net Edition

There's nothing like a little nostalgia at this time of year. And no game tugs at the heart strings of gamers like that old favourite, Warcraft II. Yes, it's back on the shelves, boys and girls, this time in the guise of the Warcraft II Battle.net Edition. This beautiful box set comes complete with a full version of Warcraft II, the Beyond the Dark Portal expansion set, and a large number of new multi-player maps.

It is a great way to spend the festive season, playing one of the games that made multiplayer real time strategy great.

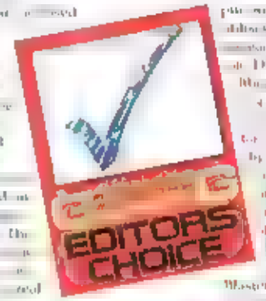
And that's exactly what this boxed set is aimed at. It seems that the boys at Blizzard finally realised how much fun players around the world had leading their armies of elves, humans, orcs and trolls up against other human players, and have taken full advantage of that fact.

Not only does this box contain all that is mentioned above, but the developers at Blizzard have updated the original Warcraft II game, making it a much better multi-player experience.

So, why not spend this festive season showing your friends how much you care by beating the living daylights out of their favourite armies? You know that it's the right thing to do.

This special edition comes from Crew (011) 233-1111 and retails at R249.00.

Sound Blaster LIVE! Platinum



Distributor: MMW, SDD
Tel: (011) 652-8400

Pros: Price
Easy Access with the Live Drive
Excellent After-Sales Support

Cons: Requires Extra 5.1/4 Inch Bay

RRP: R 999.00

Internet: www.sblive.com

Logic 3 Top Drive Racer

Distributor: Gametronix
Tel: (011) 886-1972

Pros: Compact Size
Responsive

Cons: Too Sensitive
Needs Getting Used

RRP: R 499.00

Internet: http://www.gametronix.co.za

Genius MaxFire Programmable GP8

Distributor: TVR Computers
Tel: (011) 807-1390

Pros: Inexpensive
Programmable
Comfortable

Cons: No Proportional Support
Ugly Duckling

RRP: R 99.00

Internet: http://www.tvr.co.za

Microsoft Game Pad Pro

Distributor: Crew / SDD
Tel: (011) 233-1111

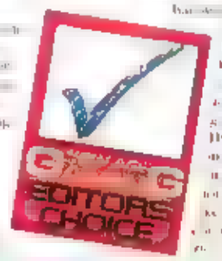
Pros: Best Looking Gamepad
Dual Precision D-Pad
Sidewinder Software

Cons: A Little Expensive
Slippery Finish
Proportional only through USB

RRP: R 329.00

Internet: http://www.microsoft.com

Act Labs Force RS



Distributor: IASOS
Tel: 011 992 3350 082 70 8805

Pros: -Force Technology
Simple Cartridge Swap for Multiple Platforms
Sturdy Design

Cons: Not Cheap

RRP: R 699.00

Internet: http://www.act-labs.com

Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer

Distributor: Crew SDD
Tel: 011 233 1111

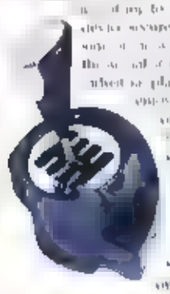
Pros: No Mouse Ball
Improved Mouse Wheel
Sharp Performance

Cons: Plastic Finish
No In-game Double Thumb Button Support
Expensive

RRP: R 499.00

Internet: http://www.microsoft.com

RS Shifter



Distributor: IASOS
Tel: (011) 992 3350 082 70 8805

Pros: 7 F Gears, 1 R Gear & Direct Shifting
Legacy Mode Support (Hi/LO)

Cons: Add-on for Act-Labs Only
Current Software Support Limited
Gimmicky

RRP: R 399.00

Internet: http://www.act-labs.com

Microsoft Dual Shock

Distributor: Crew SDD
Tel: (01 233 1 1
Pros: Decent Action Adventure Controller
Good Software Support
Easy to Manoeuvre
Cons: Not Competitive Enough
Turning Limitations
Overly Sensitive
RRP: R 499.00
Internet: http://www.microsoft.com

Logic 3 Sound Station

Distributor: Gamestronic
Tel: (011) 886 972
Pros: Good Sound
Funky Design
Base Level Control
Multi-Platform
Cons: Distortion at Loud Volume
RRP: R 699.00
Internet: http://www.gamestronic.co.za

Fanatec Speed Wheel Formula

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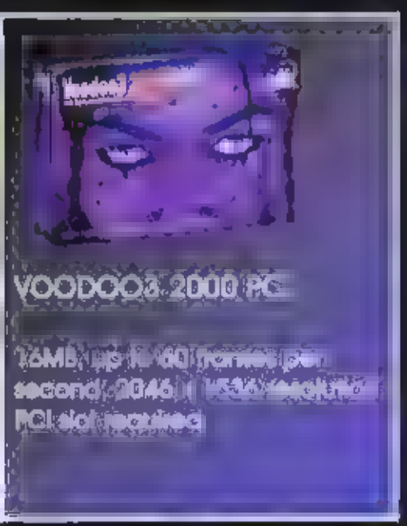

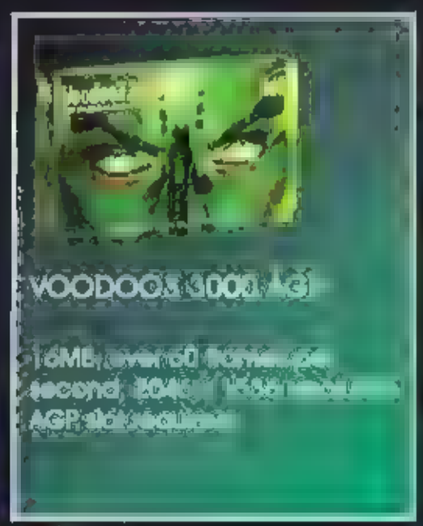

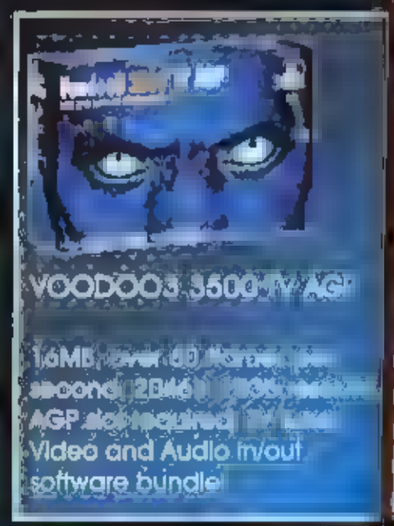

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Agenda for 2000

[illegible]

[illegible] 2000

1st release Nemesis (to be confirmed)
6 – 13 February 2000

PTQ New York (Johannesburg and Cape Town) 27 March 2000

Regional Qualifying Rounds
6 April 2000 KZN and North West Province
23 April 2000 Western Cape and Gauteng
30 April 2000 North Gauteng and Eastern Cape
7 May 2000 Freestate *

Pre release Prophecy (to be confirmed)
25 May – 4 June 2000

Nationals
24 and 25 June 2000

Gencon 2000 Incorporating the S.A. Open
3 – 7 July 2000

How to get involved

[illegible]

Drafting Tips for Mercadian Masques

[illegible]

New DCI Head for South Africa

[illegible]

Format Changes

[illegible]

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The Demo Scene

Big Time Demo Report Back

By PAUL FUNKER

HTTP WWW SLAP TO DEMOS
SADEMO@EGROUPS COM
MAVER CK@IS CO ZA

Recent E-mails to the local SA demo mailing list said it all: 'I'm dead', 'I'm finished', and 'I've just spent the day sleeping'. Most of them were from organisers but some were from attendees of Optimise 99, SA's premier demo scene competition. The past two days of hard partying, [illegible] and [illegible] networked games in between. Most agree that despite the almost mandatory odd technical glitch, this year's party was a huge success. Although sponsors [illegible] and figuratively - as much as the organisers would have liked, the few that did were extremely generous. The owners of the Horror Café and Microsoft in particular need to be thanked for donations of time, money and prizes above and beyond the call of duty. And thanks to NAG of course for letting me play the demo game on a monthly basis!

On to the party

Imagine if you put a double-story house infested with all sorts of classic horror movie memorabilia. Downstairs is a bar at which several killing figures are sitting; upstairs is a maze of UTP cable, PC's and accessories. Screams and pleas can be heard as victims and victors of various networked games duke it out over a makeshift network, only just audible above the blaring of the latest musical entry. Three or four figures wander around in a state of permanent stress, trying to give the (false) impression that the programme for the day is completely under control. If you're struggling, check out some of the pictures on the page. You'll have a pretty good idea of the atmosphere of the party.

Of course a demo party wouldn't be a demo party without a few hitches. The sound stubbornly refused to work for the first hour of the programme, prompting some quick rescheduling of some of the competitions. That worked out OK, except for those poor laptop wielding competitors who had to complete their musical entries on the day. I stand guilty as charged. But the music that was finished on time was of a very high standard. Lots of style, lots of individuality and lots of surprises. The votes were counted (as for all subsequent competitions) in hyper-modern fashion: strips of paper torn off, scribbled on, and placed in a cardboard box. The papers were then counted later and audited by Deloitte and Touche. Don't believe me? Well Viper counted them and he works for D&T as a security auditor. Next year it will be better I promise.

In between competitions on the first day some artists played their own MP3s over the sound system. Impressive stuff it was too. Meanwhile the surprise competitions were already in full swing. Programmers with quick problem solving talent had to produce a music with exactly one instrument and one note. Many theories were proposed and many languages were used, but only one entry eventually did the job correctly. Surprise music and surprise art were also entered by a surprising amount of attendees. The music hopefuls were given a narrow range of terrible samples with which to try and produce a decent tune. Artists could choose any picture they wanted from the walls of the [illegible]

Both competitions were eventually completed the next day as I recall, but then I don't recall much of the night too well. The open competition attracted some amusing and diverse entries. The eventual winner was a Warms clone which was played by the author on the big screen. After that, Travis Bulford gave a talk on game development - how to get started, what tools to use, what attitude to approach a project and the pitfalls of moving from demos to games. It was attended from just about everyone who was still around mid-evening. Thanks Travis. He disappeared to go and finish the final touches on his new game, which should be out soon. Keep an eye on FUTURE NAG issues for more details.

Around 4am, most organisers had made themselves comfortable on some handy mattresses in the basement and proceeded to catch a few hours. This proved too much temptation for the night owls with cameras. The results of their undoubtedly photography can be seen on the Web page along with plenty of other pictures of personalities and general goings-on at the competition.

Arising next day at a decent hour, I discovered that disk throwing was in full swing. This is quite an easy competition and open to all. Throw a floppy disk [illegible] Marks are awarded for style, distance and height gained in the process. If you've never done it before, you'll be amazed at how far a stiffy can actually travel.

[illegible] on the afternoon after some great food courtesy of the Horror Café's kitchen. By the time it was dark, it was time to judge the games and demos - the main reason in most people's minds for the competitions. Few were disappointed. The winner - Genesys - won easily thanks to a great soundtrack, original effects and good design. Pick it up off the Web page or check out the NAG CD for all the entries. Games had disappointingly few entries but those that made it were fun to watch.

Highlights

If you've ever had the privilege of going to an overseas demo competition, well Optimise 99 had it all. Technical hitches, complaints that the Quake games were too loud, great entries, a drifting programme, and odd corners of people desperately trying to finish their entries. Much current discussion on the best techniques for music, code and art could be heard throughout the weekend, and the presence of guys from Durban and Bloem made it more than just a Gauteng event. Denthor, aka Grant Smith, author of the famous Denthor tutorials which have got so many started on demo programming was there too, despite hobbling around on crutches. Next time we'll organise a bus, Cape Town sceners, I promise. The overall quality of all the entries was the biggest surprise of [illegible] and the [illegible] demos were of such [illegible] that I'm sure we'll see some of them in the future. Keep an eye on the Web page for more details. Suffice to say that we have some great talent in SA. Don't take my word for it - check out the entries for yourself.

Lowlights

Very few really. The voting system needs to move out of the Cretaceous Period. The sound hitches were normal and probably won't be entirely eliminated. Panning effects are hard to hear on the sound system at the venue, but to be fair that's the only complaint about it.

Perhaps the biggest problem was marketing - it was non-existent! If you read NAG or the SA Demo mailing list you knew about the competition. If you don't you probably didn't. That will change next year without doubt. More sponsors and more entries should only make Optimise go from strength to strength. So start working on your entries for Optimise 00. Or should that be 2000? In just a few weeks, we'll know for sure.

Important Information
This section is for PlayStation exclusively, PC gamers please see the cover CD where we place any new cheats for PC games. The archive on the CD is ongoing and contains all PC cheats to date. In the future we may consider placing a PlayStation cheat archive on the CD.

Xena Warrior Princess

[illegible] press [illegible]
[illegible], Square, Up, Rig

[illegible] the Main menu, press Triangle [illegible]
[illegible] Triangle, Square, Squa[illegible]

[illegible] Square

Grand Theft Auto 2

[illegible]
Infinite Energy
All Weapons
[illegible] Multiplier
[illegible]
No Cop
Maximum Wanted Level
More Money
[illegible]

Press Up when driving a car that has a radio to change stations

[illegible] the territory of whatever [illegible] working for and they [illegible] them for you

MGS. VR Missions

[illegible] start at the Konami [illegible] the introduction to the game [illegible] to get a different picture [illegible] the selection screen, it will feature the Ninja with his mask [illegible]

Destrega

[illegible] three levels [illegible] attack

[illegible] the [illegible] select screen to randomly pick a level.

[illegible]

Beat 1 player tournament and get excellent on Ruoos or Jackie, Fo[illegible] or Ru[illegible] and Reyus or Princess Anise. Go to the 2-player battle and do the following
Player 1 holds R1 and L1. Player 2 holds R2 and L2 and if done correctly, Goku should appear on char-[illegible]

Beat 1 player tournament with [illegible] in [illegible]

[illegible] 2 player battle with Goku vs Goku and player [illegible] should become villain. Now save immediately or you will [illegible] him

Castrol Honda Superbike Racing

[illegible] motorbike out of [illegible]. At roughly 20mph let off the throttle for about three seconds before accelerating again. Note: This cheat will [illegible] while cornering

Crash Team Racing

Finish the Nitro Tour level using [illegible] mode

At the main or new game screen hold L1 + R1 and press down, Circle, Triangle, R2 [illegible]

Use the arcade 1 player mode to finish the easy, medium and hard difficulty to get up to 4 new are[illegible]

[illegible] lect all four red coins in adventure mode

Win the Red Gem Cup to unlock Ripper Roo

Collect all four green coins in adventure mode.

Win the Green Gem Cup to unlock Papu Papu
Blue Gem Cup
Collect all four blue coins in adventure mode

Win the Blue Gem Cup to unlock Komodo Joe

Collect all four yellow coins in adventure mode

PLAYSTATION CHEATS

[illegible] unlock

Quake 2

Beat the game [illegible]
for multiplayer [illegible]
and One hit K[illegible]

Sled Storm

[illegible] X, Triangle as a password

Enter Square [illegible]
Triangle, R2 [illegible] as a [illegible] word

[illegible] are
R1, L[illegible] and [illegible]

If you see [illegible] rabbits hopping across the [illegible], run into them they [illegible] give [illegible] 500 points

Knockout Kings 2000

Mission: Impossible

RC Stunt Copter

NASCAR 2000

Hot Wheels Turbo Racing

Please send any cheat requests assassin@dog.com

In last months Command & Conquer Tiberian Sun Strategy Guide we discussed some general basic concepts that apply to both GDI and NOD, as well as specific issues pertaining to GDI only. In this instalment we take a look at some more advanced general concepts and at options available to NOD.

ADVANCED DONGERS

COMMAND & CONQUER TIBERIAN SUN STRATEGY GUIDE

Place your Power Plants

Support Units

Engineers

Engineers have always

Underground

Many players consider NOD to be superior by

The Importance of EMP Cannons

Once

BROTHERHOOD OF NOD

NOD's main advantage, and should be taken full advantage of. Thus, Stealth Tanks and Stealth Generators are important to master, as well as the various subterranean units. The other NOD units, however, are far from useless. Let's take a closer look at some key players:

NOD Infantry

The Brotherhood is the only side that has access to rocket troops. These are the most effective type of infantry against armoured vehicles, and also fire most eloquently at flying units. Their main disadvantage is the fact that NOD has no medics, and thus Rocket Infantry tend to have a limited life span, in contrast to GDI's Medic-assisted troopers. The same applies to NOD's Light Infantry, so NOD veteran infantry troops are rather rare, except for Cyborgs.
Cyborgs are a very important NOD unit that regenerates when in Tiberium (unlike most other infantry). They pack a chaingun that is murderous against infantry, but substantially less useful against armour. Their own armour is vehicle class, which means that machineguns and the like don't do them much damage, but rockets and cannon shells take their toll.
Cyborgs excel at guarding Harvesters - these spend at least half their time in Tiberium fields, and Cyborgs heal in Tiberium, so any engagements in the field give Cyborgs the advantage of regeneration even during combat (albeit slowly).
The specials available to NOD are the Cyborg Commando and the Mutant Hijacker. The first of these is a killing machine of note with considerable health and strong armour (of vehicle type) and a tremendous punch - always good to have. The Mutant Hijacker is rather overpriced given his ability, but one of his more devastating uses is to capture MCV's (granted, the opportunity for this kind of stunt presents itself very rarely, but it's definitely been done!).

Light Vehicles

A throwback to Command & Conquer (Tiberian Dawn) is the Attack Cycle (previously known as the Recon Bike), and it remains the fastest land unit in the game (though GDI Wolverines move almost as fast). As such, this makes the Attack Cycle one of the ideal scouting units, especially in the early game. They are also effective against armour (due to their rocket launchers), but must hunt in packs (as in C&C: Tiberian Dawn), and can no longer shoot at air units. They are not as effective against tanks and the like as in the original, but in packs of six or eight they can hunt down Harvesters almost with impunity, then withdraw when resistance appears. This is typical of NOD's guerrilla style of warfare, and is a principle that should generally be adhered to, as GDI will in general out-firepower a NOD player's forces - guile and subterfuge are vital to NOD's success.
The NOD Buggy is one of the vehicles with arguably the least use. While cheap and quick to produce, they lack the firepower to deal with anything other than normal infantry (i.e. not Cyborgs). As scouts, however, they are essentially on a par with the bikes, having a longer visual range but slightly slower movement.

NOD Armoured Units

Excluding Stealth Tanks, Subterranean APC's and Devil's Tongue tanks, NOD's armoured arsenal consists of Tick Tanks and Artillery, not counting Mobile Sensor Arrays. Tick Tanks are essentially normal tanks with the ability to half-bury themselves to protect themselves. This allows for a mobile defence, when needed, as the Tick Tanks can be deployed in key defensive positions, then relocated as the perimeter expands. Because they do not require to be deployed in order to shoot, they are a wonderfully versatile unit with dual capabilities.
Artillery are NOD's long-distance annihilators. Their first use is usually as defence, due to the fact that they can open fire on incoming enemy units before they are anywhere close to shooting at you. As an offensive unit, they need to be used in groups, as buildings can be repaired faster than one Artillery unit can damage it. Furthermore, Artillery must always be backed by other units, as they become vulnerable once enemies manage to get close. The fact that they move slowly and must be deployed on flat ground before they can fire means that fine micro-management is often required.

The Sneaky Stuff

NOD truly shines in the arena of guerrilla warfare. Stealth Tanks are the pet hate of many a GDI commander. In Tiberian Sun they are not as effective as in Tiberian Dawn, for the following reasons: they have become more expensive, require a higher tech-level and they can now be detected by Mobile Sensor Arrays. They remain exceptionally useful, though. They can be used to harass Harvesters, fading away as soon as organised resistance materialises.

They can be used to infiltrate bases that don't have the luxury of a Mobile Sensor Array. They can lie in wait until the enemy's forces have left to attack you, then pounce on the lightly defended base, once again slipping away if challenged. Learning to use the Subterranean units can mean the difference between victory and defeat. Subterranean units have great psychological value, as a player defending against them usually ends up suffering something akin to a state of chronic paranoia. Also, one of the most unwelcome notifications is "subterranean unit detected" (usually repeated several times) even though the lack of this warning usually ends even uglier. The power of Subterranean APC's should be pretty apparent - a troop and Engineer delivery system that, while underground, is immune to everything except EMP Cannons. Devil's Tongues are devastating against regular infantry (i.e. not Cyborgs) and torch some buildings (for instance, Power Plants) in fairly short order.
Don't forget that any subterranean unit that is in trouble can usually be pulled out of the fight by making it burrow - if the situation is not favourable, just dive under and get out of there, to return to fight another day.
The trick to using subterranean units is to draw the enemy into firing off his EMP Cannon (if he has one) before attacking with them. It is also quite useful to take out any Mobile Sensor Arrays whenever possible. Thereafter it is merely a matter of surfacing at some relatively unprotected point (usually toward the rear of a base) and striking quickly. This requires fairly good intelligence, so scouting the enemy's base is imperative, even if some units must be sacrificed in the process.

Repairing Vehicles

Where GDI have the advantage of Medics healing infantry, NOD benefit from free repairs to their vehicles (assuming at least one Mobile Repair Vehicle has been constructed). As soon as your first engagement becomes likely, you should build one or two Mobile Repair Vehicles (having more, when possible, is not at all a bad thing!). Keep them in guard mode so they seek out nearby damaged friendly units (including your allies', in team games) and repair them. This ability is a huge help when facing GDI's superior firepower, as several MRV's working together can keep a number of your units alive while they are being shot at.

Air Units

NOD's air arsenal consists of two units - the Harpy and the Banshee. The first of these is a general-purpose unit with a machinegun that does unusually high damage to all armour types, as well as having a huge payload. These are great for hunting Harvesters and chopping up clusters of infantry. Banshees are bomber units with a more specific purpose - erasing buildings. They are very fast and, if used correctly, can often outrun SAM's and the like. Their damage, unlike GDI's Orca Bomber, is not an area effect, but rather pin-point-accurate plasma shots. A fact to be aware of - Banshee shots go right through Firestorm Defences, though normally the Banshee itself will crash into the Firestorm Wall and be destroyed.

NOD Buildings

The most controversial, and one of the most important NOD defensive structures, is the Stealth Generator. Become familiar with the Stealth Generator's area of effect if you are planning on using them, as efficiency is very important. Few people find themselves able to afford more than one Stealth Generator, partly due to their high cost, but also because of their huge power drain. Bear this in mind, as the loss of a couple of Power Plants usually results in discovery.

Closing Comments

In short, playing NOD effectively revolves around effectively waging a war of hit-and-run attacks, terror and psychology. Players often panic when their opponents' bases disappear from the map by being cloaked - use this fact. Players are often intimidated by approaching subterranean units - take advantage of this. Above all, maintain a well-balanced army whose different elements can protect each other, and don't stand and fight a GDI opponent except on your own terms, i.e. if you outnumber or outposition him sufficiently.

Next issue we'll take a look at Age of Empires II: The Age of Kings...

Send Off

Finally we have come not only to the end of a year but also to the end of the millennium, and yes I know technically speaking the millennium only starts in 2001 but let's just pretend 2000 is the new millennium. At least it is for your computer as far as the Y2K bug is concerned. Come to think of it January 1st will be an interesting day to see just how many computers will be affected worldwide. Who knows I might just get 100 years worth of interest in a split second, at least that's what I will be dreaming about on December 31 1999.

As for New Age Gaming we will be back in the New Year with a jam-packed January/February edition that will be hitting the shelves in the last week of January. This monster issue will contain reviews of all the big titles that didn't quite make their December shipping date on time such as Diablo 2, Quake 3, Gabriel Knight 3, Ultima Ascension and so on. We realise that everyone would like us to have a separate January and February edition, but due to all the companies closing over the Christmas period and the fact that we need a short break (to play Quake 3 of course) it's impossible this year. We have planned next years schedule well in advance, meaning, if all goes well, there should be a separate January and February edition.

Anyone who buys the magazine at their local newsagent and haven't quite got around to subscribing yet should take note that as of next year all issues will be on the shelves the last week of the month prior to the publication month. In layman's terms you should be able to buy the May edition by the last week of April for example. This way we will be bringing our release dates in line with international standards.

Also note that our phone numbers have changed and the new numbers are listed on the Editor's Note page. So should you have any queries or need to contact us please use the new numbers. This is especially important for anyone that is faxing through a new subscription and would like to receive it on time.

We also have some other interesting events planned for the New Year although at this time they are hush, hush and my Editor will kick my butt if I reveal them. Suffice to say that some of these will be GLSA events and there is a rumour about a game faire planned for the middle of next year floating around the office too. No confirmations yet but keep your eyes out for the next issue, I think we will be making announcements of some of these events then.

'This is the end of the world... and we feel fine...'

Everyone here at New Age Gaming would like to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and also the best of luck come the 1st of January. Until next year...

There is a very good chance that many of the games that didn't arrive this year December will be out in June 2000...

The guys and girls at the mighty Bullfrog have always managed to impress everyone with their innovative and fun titles through the years. Everything has been updated in this fun amusement park game, you can ride on the attractions, open hotdog stands and even clean up vomit off the sidewalk (a favourite feature that returns for this big sequel).

The biggest problem with this game is how does one justify scoring it over 100%? After much anticipation and a stampede at the door, Soul Assassin eventually won the name calling and pushing contest and bagged the big one for 1999. Pure multiplayer mayhem in its finest form, nothing comes close and until the next Quake, we doubt anything will. Expect a raiting review next issue.

It looks like a kid's game but you'll probably find more adults playing it after bedtime, when the house is still and not a mouse is stirring. Guide this little dragon through a series of quests to flame grill the bad guys and collect the collectibles. It's got better graphics, better sound, a bigger game world and more evil creatures than ever before. *[I just had to get the last word in this millennium, and here goes, Ed]*: Word.

a NAGging suspicion...

Non tales of horror, disgrace and shame from the NAG office, written and illustrated by Stryke

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